Course Description. Introduced by Stephen Colbert and now an entry in the Oxford English Dictionary, what has been called “truthiness” is defined as “the quality of appearing to be true while not actually or necessarily being so” and the act of “accepting or presenting something which is not true as the truth.” Certainly, the perils and possibilities of truthiness seem pressing today. But mass-circulated and popular media has long been a purveyor of facts intermingled with fictions. In this course, we will undertake an historical survey of U.S. serial publications through an emphasis on their “truthiness.”

Our exploration of Western literature and serial publication will pose the following questions: What are the relations between documentation, circulation, and perception? How are the edges of fact blurred by their mediation in linguistic and visual representation? Why does fact shade so quickly into fiction when representations of an “Other” are at stake? What are the relations between institutionalized conditions such as structural racism and social fictions such as race in the US? We will also seek answers to questions related to journalistic and print histories: What did historical newspapers print? How were such things decided? How did editors use reprinting, recirculation, and remediating to advance social or literary agendas in US history? What is the history of yellow journalism, and why is that history important? How are histories of cartoons and illustrations tied to histories of ethnic experience in the US?

In examining the production of “truthiness” as it circulated and circulates still in US culture, students can develop as interpreters and producers of texts, and thus prepare themselves to act ethically in the world based upon those interpretations.

Course Objectives. At the end of the course, students should be able to:

- develop interpretive/analytical positions about texts that account for cultural/historical contexts and literary content.
- describe and assess information as presented in periodical and newspaper formats such as fiction, poetry, investigative reports, editorials/opinions, and other expository forms.
- compose clear sentences, paragraphs, and interpretive arguments in Standardized American English across a range of academic genres.

Additionally, students who successfully complete this course will be able to demonstrate awareness of and abilities in four Core Objectives as defined by the Higher Education Coordinating Board of the State of Texas. These are:

- Critical Thinking Skills (CT) - creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, and analysis, evaluation and synthesis of information
- Communication Skills (COM) - effective development, interpretation and expression of ideas through written, oral and visual communication

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• Social Responsibility (SR) - intercultural competence, knowledge of civic responsibility, and the ability to engage effectively in regional, national, and global communities
• Personal Responsibility (PR) - ability to connect choices, actions and consequences to ethical decision-making

For more information, see http://www.thecb.state.tx.us/index.cfm?objectid=427FDE26-AF5D-F1A1-E6FDB62091E2A507

Assignments
Hoax Assignment. 10%
Discussion Posts and Moderating. 20%
Midterm Exam. 20%
Final Exam. 20%
Online Curation Project. 30%

Discussion Posts. One of the ways we will develop online community is by using discussion boards to facilitate class discussion. For each week, several students will be responsible for the discussion board as moderator. The moderator is responsible for summarizing, extending, and otherwise managing the online discussion for the week. See the assignment sheet for more detail.

Online Curation Project. The major assignment in this course is the creation, over the course of the semester, of a digital exhibit around an issue of your choosing. This assignment will include several elements to be graded separately: a proposal (10%); a mid-semester check-in (5%); the complete exhibit including captions and introductory material for each component (15%). There will be much more information, and some examples, available online as the semester progresses.

Exams. There will be two exams in this class: a midterm and final. The midterm will include multiple choice, short answer, and short essay questions. The final examination will consist of two longer essays.

Specific Course Policies.

Class Participation.
Your class participation grade encompasses two important parts of the course: reading and collaboration. Each week, you will contribute to a discussion board or other online communication module (such as reading quizzes) to demonstrate your engagement with the course content and your grasp of the course material. You will also work with your peers in class as discussion leader and writing collaborator. You will frequently collaborate with your classmates by reading and responding to their drafts. Each major writing project will require peer feedback organized around review questions pertinent to the assignment. Students failing to take the task of peer review seriously will be penalized.

Studying Western literature in a serious way means getting to enjoy the pleasures of beautiful writing and the insights of sophisticated minds. It also means confronting violent histories, especially histories of race, sex, and labor. Our readings include accounts of physical abuses, rapes, and other harms, as well as literally dozens of instances of racist epithets. We will talk openly about how hard it can be to read this work, but all assigned readings are required. Also important is your willingness to engage thoughtfully, generously, and sympathetically with your peers in this learning community. Please email Professor Salter to discuss any questions or concerns you may have about your own participation in this course.

Communication. As members of a learning community, everyone is expected to be up-to-date and responsible for any changes or additions to the course schedule. I will be using your TAMU-CC email, through Blackboard, to send messages about readings, assignments, and assorted matters to the class throughout the semester. It is imperative to check email regularly and stay aware of what is happening in and outside of the classroom.
I will hold virtual “office hours” between 12-2 PM on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays. At that time, I will be online and prepared to respond immediately to emails. Otherwise, students can expect a response to email queries on the same day during the business week (Monday-Friday) for emails sent before 7PM. If I have not responded to an email within 24 hours, please feel free to follow up.

**Work Policies.** Descriptions of each assignment, as well as evaluation criteria, will be provided throughout the course. I expect assignments to be completed on time, as evidenced by the date stamp given to them by the Blackboard dropboxes. Major assignments will be docked one full letter grade for each day after the due date that they are late; everyday course activities (e.g., reading responses, smaller writing activities, peer-review exchanges) cannot be made up if missed. I use this system even in the event of excusable situations, such as minor sicknesses or other unforeseen conflicts. However, any exceptions to this policy are made at instructor discretion. If you have conflicts, or something unexpected arises, do not hesitate to contact your instructor, and we'll arrive at a solution together. You must hand in all major assignments to pass the course. Incompletes will not be given except under extenuating circumstances that are discussed with your instructor prior to assignment of final grades.

**General Educational Policies.**

*Classroom / Professional Behavior Online.* Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi has a diverse student population that represents the population of the state. Our goal is to provide you with a high quality educational experience that is free from repression. You are responsible for following the rules of the University, city, state and federal government. We expect that you will behave in a manner that is dignified, respectful and courteous to all people, regardless of sex, ethnic/racial origin, religious background, sexual orientation or disability. Behaviors that infringe on the rights of another individual will not be tolerated.

Please bear in mind that respectful behavior in an online learning community has certain specific elements. Your tone, facial expression, and other interpersonal social cues are not available in online communication, so err on the side of clarity, concision, and kindness in your online communications. Remember that sarcasm and irony can be hard to interpret in an online context. Remember also that everything you post is recorded in text; think carefully about the digital permanence of your communication in every aspect of the course.

*Plagiarism and Academic Misconduct.* TAMU-CC identifies “Academic Misconduct” as “engaging in an act that violates the standards of the academic integrity policy as described in the Student Code of Conduct and Procedure for Academic Misconduct Cases.”

Specifically, academic misconduct includes plagiarism, the act of using someone else’s words and ideas without attribution. The TAMU-CC Student Code of Conduct defines Plagiarism as “Intentionally, knowingly, or carelessly presenting the work of another as one’s own without proper acknowledgement of the source, with the exception of information that is generally accepted as common knowledge. Examples:

- Using another’s work from print, web or other sources without acknowledging the source.
- Quoting from a source without citation.
- Using facts, figures, graphs, charts or information without acknowledgement of the source.
- Using a past assignment the student has completed as a portion of a new assignments, without providing citation. Please note that without instructor permission, this is also considered a multiple submission violation.
We will discuss MLA citation style and the appropriate use of academic sources and conventions throughout the semester. Please do not hesitate to ask me any questions about academic misconduct and academic integrity at anytime. If you are discovered plagiarizing you will automatically receive an "F" for the paper, or depending on the severity, for the class, and will be reported to the appropriate officials for further disciplinary action. See the TAMU-CC Student Code of Conduct for more detail. 

http://judicialaffairs.tamucc.edu/studentcofc.html

Grade Appeals.
As stated in University Procedure 13.02.99.C2.01, Student Grade Appeal Procedures, a student who believes that he or she has not been held to appropriate academic standards as outlined in the class syllabus, equitable evaluation procedures, or appropriate grading, may appeal the final grade given in the course. The burden of proof is upon the student to demonstrate the appropriateness of the appeal. A student with a complaint about a grade is encouraged to first discuss the matter with the instructor.
For complete details, including the responsibilities of the parties involved in the process and the number of days allowed for completing the steps in the process, see University Procedure 13.02.99.C2.01, Student Grade Appeal Procedures (available at http://academicaffairs.tamucc.edu/rules_procedures/assets/13.02.99.C2.01_student_grade_appeal_procedure.pdf).
For complete details on the process of submitting a formal grade appeal, please visit the College of Liberal Arts website, http://cla.tamucc.edu/about/student-resources.html. For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Associate Dean’s Office.

Disabilities Accommodations. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please call or visit Disability Services at (361) 825-5816 in Corpus Christi Hall 116.
If you are a returning veteran and are experiencing cognitive and/or physical access issues in the classroom or on campus, please contact the Disability Services office for assistance at (361) 825-5816.

Statement of Academic Continuity. In the event of an unforeseen adverse event, such as a major hurricane and classes could not be held on the campus of Texas A&M University–Corpus Christi; this course would continue through the use of Blackboard and/or email. In addition, the syllabus and class activities may be modified to allow continuation of the course. Ideally, University facilities (i.e., emails, web sites, and Blackboard) will be operational within two days of the closing of the physical campus. However, students need to make certain that the course instructor has a primary and a secondary means of contacting each student.

Academic Advising. The College of Liberal Arts requires that students meet with an Academic Advisor as soon as they are ready to declare a major. The Academic Advisor will set up a degree plan, which must be signed by the student, a faculty mentor, and the department chair. Degree plans are prepared in the CLA Academic Advising Center. The University uses an online Degree Audit system. Any amendment must be approved by the Department Chair and the Office of the Dean. All courses and requirements specified in the final degree plan audit must be completed before a degree will be granted. The College's Academic Advising Center is located in Driftwood 203E, and can be reached at 825-3466.
It is imperative that all students visit regularly with an academic adviser. Each college within the university has an academic advising center, staffed by full-time, professional advisers to assist students with course selection, degree plans, and other academic matters. To find out how to contact the right
adviser, go to: http://www.tamucc.edu/academics/advising.php
Students who have yet to declare a major are advised by the Academic Advising Transition Center. For more information, go to: http://www.tamucc.edu/~aac

**Dropping a Class:** Although I hope we will learn together for the course of this semester, sometimes a student must drop a course. Please see me if you are considering doing so. You must initiate the process to drop the course by going to the Student Services Center and filling out a course drop form. Just stopping attendance and participation WILL NOT automatically result in your being dropped from the class. November 15, is the last day to drop a class with an automatic grade of “W” this term.

**Proposed Schedule.**

**Disclaimer:** Please note that the specifics of this Syllabus are subject to change, and you will be responsible for abiding by any such changes. Your instructor will notify you of any changes.

Week 1 (Aug. 28-Aug. 31) Introductory

Unit 1: Science Writing. Week 2 (Sept. 04–07) – Week 4 (Sept. 19–21)
Week 2: 09/04 - 09/07. E.A. Poe, “The Balloon Hoax”; Selections from the *New York Day Book* and *The North Star*
Week 4: 09/18- 09/21. War of the Worlds. HG Wells, Orson Wells. Final Draft of Hoax Assignment Due (F 09/29)

Unit 2: Lifestyle Writing. Week 5 (Sept. 25-28) – Week 7 (Oct. 23–26)
Week 6: 10/02 – 10/05. Nathaniel West. Miss Lonelyhearts. Proposal for Online Curatorial Project Due
Week 7: 10/09 – 10/12. Lifestyle/Women’s Magazines. LHJ; Goop; Jane; MS

Week 8: Midterm Examination
M/T 10/16 & 10/17: Review/Prep
Thursday, Oct. 19. Midterm Examination

Week 9: 10/23 – 10/26
Lifestyle Cartoons: R. Crumb; Alison Bechdel; Bill Watterson

Unit 3: Humor. Week 10 (Oct. 30-Nov. 02) – Week 14 (Nov. 27-30)
Week 10: 10/31 – 11/02. *Vanity Fair*/19thC Satire
Week 13: 11/20 – 11/21. Listsicles; The Toast/McSweeney’s
Week 14: 11/28 – 11/30. Listsicles/Quizzes. Submission of Complete Curatorial Project Due Online
Week 15: Dec. 05
Course Conclusion

Finals Week: Dec. 8 – 14
Final Examination online