

Calling BS: The What, When, Why, and How

LDR 101-K

<i>Instructor Information</i>	<i>Course Information</i>
Janelle S. Peifer jpeifer@agnesscott.edu Office: Bullock Science Center 118 E 404.471.5362	Fall 2017 TR 11.30a - 12.45p Bullock Science Center 209 W-B Office Hours: M, 9.00-10.00a; R, 10.00 - 11.30a
Course Tutor: Hannah Piecuch - book on the CWS website or e-mail (hpiecuch@agnesscott.edu)	

In time with limitless information availability at our literal fingertips, critical discernment is key. This section of LDR 101 will adapt selected content from a common course developed by Carl T. Bergstrom and Jevin West at the University of Washington. The course will focus on the marriage of scientific inquiry in STEM and broad liberal arts training. This seminar will foster students' ability to both evaluate and construct data-driven, valid arguments as it relates to their future as global leaders and change agents.

Readings

Lunsford, Andrea. *The St. Martin's Handbook*. 8th edition. New York: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2015. This is a book that you will want to purchase and plan to keep. It is an important resource for this course and throughout your time at Agnes Scott. It is available in the campus bookstore.

Cronon, William. "Only Connect...? The Goals of a Liberal Education." *The American Scholar* 67, no. 4 (Autumn 1998): 73-80. (This article is available on our course site.)

Other readings are accessible via Moodle or through Agnes Scott's library databases.

Communication and Questions

If you have a question about the course, first reference this syllabus. If after reviewing the syllabus you still have questions or would like to talk further, feel free to come by my office hours. I ask that you err towards reaching out earlier than later in the semester if any concerns arise. If you are unavailable during my set office hours, e-mail me to find another time. I strive to respond to e-mail messages within 48 hours.

Course-Related Discussion Group Text

Members of the class will establish a course-related discussion group text to facilitate communications about the course among students. Be respectful of your fellow students when you use this resource and refrain from discussing topics unrelated to the class.

Accessibility and Accommodations

We will seek to build an inclusive classroom environment together. I will work with Agnes Scott's Office of Student Disability Services (OSDS) to accommodate students' learning needs provide accommodations to students registered with OSDS.

Office of Academic Advising (p. 404.471.6174)

To find more information about establishing accommodations, visit:

<http://www.agnesscott.edu/academicadvising/disability-services.html>.

Title IX

Title IX makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender are Civil Rights offenses subject to the same kinds of accountability and the same kinds of support applied to offenses against other protected categories. For the safety of the entire community, any incidence of or information about sexual misconduct must be reported immediately. If you or someone you know has been harassed or assaulted, you can find the appropriate resources through Agnes' Title IX Coordinators: Karen Gilbert (kgilbert@agnesscott.edu, 404.471.6435) and/or Kristian Contreras (kcontreras@agnesscott.edu, 404.471.6394).

Course Purpose and Learning Objectives

Throughout the semester, students will: 1) identify a spectrum of questionable data and arguments (What is BS?), 2) determine various situations where dubious information is more likely to arise (When and where does BS show up?), 3) examine different motivations and causes of suspect material (Why is this person BS-ing me?), and 4) practice ethical and empathetic ways to call into question perceived falsehoods and dialogue across differences with others (How do I call out BS effectively when I spot it?)

Seminar Description and Learning Objectives

LDR 101 seminars explore how the liberal arts inform good leadership. They engage every first-year student in the exploration of a specific topic while providing the intellectual orientation and skills foundational to college learning and effective leadership. All LDR 101 seminars, regardless of topic, share specific learning goals based on the faculty's conviction that all good leaders work well with others, think analytically, and communicate effectively. For these reasons, all LDR 101 seminars place special emphasis on five fundamental intellectual and leadership skills: critical thinking, writing, public speaking, digital literacy, and teamwork.

Each seminar is designed to help you do the following, both singly and as a member of a team:

- Identify and analyze significant issues, problems, and questions, and evaluate or develop effective responses.
- Summarize and explain the main ideas of a text, speech, doctrine, principle or belief.
- Develop, focus and organize ideas concerning a central topic, and create, revise and present these ideas in written, spoken, visual and digital forms using appropriate sources.
- Articulate your understanding of leadership and your capacity to lead.

Credits and Workload

To meet the requirements of this four credit course, you will spend: 1) three hours in the classroom each week and 2) at least three additional hours per week on readings and other course assignments.

Submitting Assignments

For each assignment, please review the submission guidelines closely--be sure to label and format your document as described on the assignment description and/or rubric. If you submit materials incorrectly (e.g., slipping under my office door), they will not be accepted or graded. Assignments will be docked a letter grade for each day submitted after the deadline (including weekends) except with written medical or emergency excuse.

Tardiness, Attendance, and Make-Up Policy

You may miss two classes without penalty. If you arrive more than 5 minutes late to class, that will count as an absence. Each absence over two will impact your final participation and attendance grades. If an extraordinary situation (e.g., hospitalization, death of a family member) arises that requires your absence or prevents the submission of an assignment - you *must* communicate with me, by e-mail, as soon as possible to develop a plan.

Library – Introduction and Resources (<http://agnesscott.edu/library>)

Students in LDR 101 will meet with Casey Long, User Education Librarian. She will provide a general introduction to the library and an exercise on assessing the reliability of resources. The reference librarians are available in person, by email, and by chat to help you with your research projects during your time at Agnes Scott.

Course Tutor and the Center for Writing and Speaking

The Center for Writing and Speaking has arranged a course tutor, Hanna Piecuch, for our seminar. Hanna will attend class meetings and participate in class discussions and activities. Course tutors meet regularly with professors. They are available to meet with you one-on-one and/or in groups to discuss your assignments.

At Agnes Scott tutoring in writing and speaking is not a remedial service but a satisfying and fruitful way of encouraging all students improve their abilities in writing and speaking. I hope you will all see Hanna as a significant resource, someone with whom you can work on your writing and speaking even if you already do both with success and confidence. I will require you to meet with her at times during the semester, and I strongly encourage you to consult with her on other assignments, too.

Assignments and Grade Breakdown

Reference Moodle for detailed descriptions of and rubrics for each assignment. Brief assignment descriptions are included on the next page. You are responsible for keeping track of your own grade and are able to do that using the form below.

Grading Scale

A: 93 – 100

A-: 90 – 92

B+: 87 – 89

B: 83 – 86

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B-: 80 – 82
D+: 67 – 69

C+: 77 – 79
D: 63 – 66

C: 73 – 76
D-: 60 – 62

C-: 70 – 72
F: ≤ 59

#	Assignment	Due Date	Poss. Pts.	Actual Pts.	Submission Details
	<i>Total</i>		900		
1	Defining BS Paper (Pre)	9/7	50		Print and bring to class.
2	Mini Argument Analysis Assignments (5; 20 points each)	--	100		Print and bring to class.
3	BS Inventory and Visualization (Group)	9/19	50		Print and bring to class.
4	BS Data Collection Brainstorm and Plan	10/19	50		Print and bring to class.
5	Refuting BS Oral Exercise	11/9	100		Present in class.
6	Leadership Reflection	12/11	50		Submit Link to Moodle. Upload to d-Portfolio
7	Defining BS Paper (Post)	12/11	100		Upload to Moodle.
8	BS Presentation (Group)	11/14 11/16	150		Present in class.
9	d-Portfolio 'About Me'	11/28	50		Post to d-portfolio.
10	Attendance	--	50		--
11	Participation	--	50		--
--	BS in the Wild Extra Credit (5 pts)	T, 4/11	(15 max)		Submit a one paragraph write-up by e-mail to Dr. Peifer by 5pm. Up to 3.
--	CWS/Hannah Engagement Extra Credit	T, 4/11	(15 max)		Go to CWS or meet with Hannah for extra credit.

Weekly Course Schedule¹

A list of each week's readings and materials are included at the end of this document. I will post other required (or suggested) materials to Google Drive.

Note: Readings and assignments are due by the course session indicated below – not to be completed after the session listed.

No.	Date	Topic	Assignments Due
1	R, 8/24	Introduction: What Do the Liberal Arts Have to Do with BS?	<i>Readings:</i> None. <i>Assignment(s):</i> None. <i>In Class:</i> Assign Working Group Teams and Assignment Groups
2	T, 8/29	Operationalizing BS: The What in the Context of the Liberal Arts	<i>Readings:</i> Frankfurt (1986) - On Bullshit ; Cronon - Only Connect <i>Assignment(s):</i> Initial Survey
3	R, 8/31	Case Study Day: Operationalizing BS What is the CWS (Hannah)	<i>Readings:</i> Cohen (2002) - Deeper into Bullshit <i>Assignment(s):</i> None.
4	T, 9/5	<i>Library Session on Information Literacy + BS Detection</i>	<i>Readings:</i> How Do You Know a Paper is Legit <i>Assignment(s):</i> Library Session (due by midnight before)
5	R, 9/7	Case Study Day: Transitioning to College (Self-Knowledge) Strengths Finder	<i>Readings:</i> Food Stamp Fraud at All-Time High: is It Time to End the Program? <i>Assignment(s):</i> Defining BS Paper (Pre) <i>In Class:</i> Food Stamp Case Study (Calling Bullshit); Team Contract
6	T, 9/12	Calling BS: The Why About Me/Defining BS Workshopping (Irma Cancellation)	<i>Readings:</i> Sagan (1996) - The Fine Art of Baloney Detection ; Ioannidis (2005) - Why Most Published Research Findings Are False <i>Assignment(s):</i> "About Me" Draft for d-portfolio
7	R, 9/14	Calling BS: The Why About Me/Defining BS Workshopping	<i>Readings:</i> None. <i>Assignment(s):</i> Mini Argument Analysis 1; "About Me" Draft for d-portfolio
8	T, 9/19	Calling BS: The When	<i>Readings:</i> None.

¹ I will do my best to keep the electronic version of our syllabus up-to-date and follow it in our class sessions, but may make changes.

			<i>Assignment(s):</i> BS Inventory and Visualization (Group)
9	R, 9/21	Case Study Day: Susceptible Times for BS-ing Transitioning to College (Time Management) (Hannah)	<i>Readings:</i> Turner, et al. (2008) - Selective Publication of Antidepressant Trials and Its Influence on Apparent Efficacy <i>Assignment(s):</i> Mini Argument Analysis 2
10	T, 9/26	Calling BS: The How	<i>Readings:</i> Social Media; The Incredible Rarity of Changing Your Mind (This American Life 555) ; Why Facts Don't Change Our Minds <i>Assignment(s):</i> None. <i>In Class (s):</i> Call Out Inventory and Rating
11	R, 9/28	Case Study Day: How to Call BS Transitioning to College (Professional Discernment - Internships + Jobs)	<i>Readings:</i> Scientific Studies: Last Week Tonight with John Oliver . <i>Assignment(s):</i> None.
12	T, 10/3	Intro to Scientific BS	<i>Readings:</i> The Principle of Proportional Ink ; Science Isn't Broken <i>Assignment(s):</i> Mini Argument Analyses 3 <i>In Class:</i> Hack Your Way to Scientific Glory
13	R, 10/5	Case Study Day: Scientific BS Transitioning to College (Professional Discernment - Research) Analyzing Strengths Finder	<i>Readings:</i> Heathers (2016) - The GRIM Test ; Amy Cuddy Power Posing and Refutation <i>Assignment(s):</i> None. <i>In Class:</i> Musicians + Mortality Case Study (Calling Bullshit)
14	T, 10/10	Causal and Statistical BS	<i>Readings:</i> Spurious Correlations ; Matthews (2000) - Storks Deliver Babies <i>Assignment(s):</i> Midterm Evaluation
Thursday, 10/12 - Sunday, 10/15: Fall Break			
15	T, 10/17	<i>Library Session on Data Acquisition and Analyses</i>	<i>Readings:</i> boyd and Crawford (2011) - Six Provocations for Big Data <i>Assignment(s):</i> Mini Argument Analysis 4; Library Assignment *due midnight before)
16	R, 10/19	Case Study Day: Critically Analyzing Research-Based BS	<i>Readings:</i> Lehe and Powell - Simpson's Paradox ; Why Most Published Research Findings Are False

		Transitioning to College (Professional Discernment - Research)	<i>Assignment(s):</i> BS Data Collection Brainstorm + Plan <i>In Class:</i> Misleading Axes on Graph Case Study (Calling Bullshit)
17	T, 10/24	BS in the News Media (Fake News and Alternative Facts)	<i>Readings:</i> Goldman (2016) - Reading Fake News, Pakistani Minister Directs Nuclear Threat at Israel ; Kiley and Robertson (2016) - How to Spot Fake News <i>Assignment(s):</i> None.
18	R, 10/26	<i>d-Center Session: Digital Portfolios</i>	<i>Readings:</i> Markovich (2016) - \$74 million later, Mercer Mess is 2 seconds faster ; Donath (2016) - Why Fake News Stories Thrive Online <i>Assignment(s):</i> Mini Argument Analysis 5
19	T, 10/31	What is BS Panel <i>Alison Hall (Business Mgt)</i> <i>Chris DePree (Astronomy)</i> <i>Kristian Contreras (Diversity Programs)</i> <i>Kijua Sanders-McMurtry (Community Diversity)</i> <i>Nell Ruby (Art)</i>	<i>Readings:</i> Sokal (1996) - A Physicist Experiments with Cultural Studies <i>Assignment(s):</i> None.
20	R, 11/2	Refuting BS Transitioning to College (Presenting) (Hannah)	<i>Readings:</i> Cook and Lewandowsky (2011) - The Debunking Handbook ; Getting Called Out: How to Apologize <i>Assignment(s):</i> None. <i>In Class:</i> Gender Gap in 100-meter Dash Times Case Study (Calling Bullshit)
Tuesday, 11/7 - No Class - Presidential Interviews			
21	R, 11/9	Case Study Day: Refuting BS Oral Exercise	<i>Readings:</i> Dachis (2012) - How to Productively Call People Out on Their BS (Without Being an Asshole) <i>Assignment(s):</i> None. <i>In Class:</i> Refuting BS Oral Exercise
22	T, 11/14	Presentation Day A	<i>Readings:</i> None. <i>Assignment(s):</i> None. <i>In Class:</i> None.

23	R, 11/16	Presentation Day B	<i>Readings:</i> None. <i>Assignment(s):</i> None. <i>In Class:</i> None.
24	T, 11/21	Leadership Reflection Revising--An Inside Look at What Tutors Do (Hannah)	<i>Readings:</i> None. <i>Assignment(s):</i> None. <i>In Class:</i> d-Portfolio "About Me" revised
Thursday, 11/23 - No Class - Thanksgiving			
Tuesday, 11/28 - No Class - Presidential Search			
26	R, 11/30	Wrap-Up and Next Steps	<i>Readings:</i> None. <i>Assignment(s):</i> None. <i>In Class:</i> Teaching Evaluations
<p>Reading Day: T, 12/5 Exams: W, 12/6 - M, 12/11 Leadership Reflection + Defining BS Final Paper (Post) - Due by end of exams. Final Grades Posted to AscAgnes: after noon on T, 12/19</p>			

Course Expectations and Policies

At the beginning of our course, you will digitally sign a copy of the commitment below -- keep one for your reference. These expectations on policies form the foundation of a bidirectional relationship that we both agree to from the beginning of our work together.

	<i>Your Commitment</i>	<i>My Commitment</i>
<i>Honesty and Integrity</i>	Abide by Agnes Scott policies and uphold standards of honor and integrity in all course-related activities.	Model morality and ethical behaviors. Provide clear expectations about policies related to academic integrity.
<i>Responsible E-Mail Use</i>	Check your e-mail on a regular basis (minimum: ~ every 3 days). Communicate electronically in a respectful, thoughtful, and professional way that includes: 1) a salutation with a correct title and name (e.g., "Dear Dr. Peifer,"), 2) a coherent body with correct spelling and grammar, and 3) a closing and signature.	Strive to respond in 48 hours to e-mail messages. Communicate electronically in a respectful, thoughtful, and professional way that includes: 1) a salutation with a correct name, 2) a coherent body with correct spelling and grammar, and 3) a closing and signature.
<i>Proactivity and Communication</i>	Reach out early and often if you have a concern, will not attend class, or will be tardy. Be proactive in addressing issues early in the	Be available and accessible during class, office hours, and by e-mail. Be responsive, non-reactive, and non-judgmental when you share

	semester, come to office hours, and share your feedback, needs, or thoughts throughout the semester.	information. Keep privacy and provide accommodations when needed.
<i>Respect and Openness</i>	Treat peers in class with respect. Work towards inclusive communication, thought, and behavior to create a safe environment for all students. Demonstrate respect for the employees who maintain the space - feel free to eat in class, but ensure that you collect trash and clean up after yourself.	Approach students respectfully. Be self-reflective and humble. Identify when classroom becomes unsafe and respond in a warm, patient way.
<i>Punctuality and Attendance</i>	Attend all classes and be prepared to begin class and discuss assignments on time. Inform me of conflicts or extraordinary situations as early as possible. Abide by attendance, tardiness, assignment submission, and make-up policies listed in the syllabus.	Be ready to begin on time. Accurately log attendance and tardiness. Provide clear expectations on attendance/tardiness policies. Communicate with students with extraordinary circumstances to develop alternative plans.
<i>Presence and Participation</i>	Find ways to participate in class that align with your preferences, personality, and communication style. Do not sleep in class. If you are less vocal and/or outgoing in classroom settings, explore other ways to engage (e.g., e-mailing questions about the reading before class, being active in small groups, coming to office hours).	Balance lecture and information-giving with opportunities for dialogue, small group work, and discussion. Choose thought-provoking and relevant articles and materials. Maintain a safe, non-judgmental, and respectful classroom space. Come to class as well-rested and present as possible.
<i>Thoughtful Technology Use</i>	Put cell phones away, out of sight, during class. Use laptops and tablets for note-taking and course-related work -- not for personal matters. Utilize appropriate, professional, and peer-reviewed sources and properly cite them.	Integrate educational technology into the course and take advantage of different forms of media (e.g., videos, online forums). Allow students to use laptops and other devices as learning tools and set reasonable limits on their use where they may inhibit learning.
<i>Attentiveness to Detail</i>	Review syllabus, assignments, and course-related materials carefully. Submit materials and comport yourself in a way that aligns with the articulated expectations.	Provide and share clearly written guidelines and expectations. Keep students accountable to syllabus, assignment descriptions and rubrics. Be well-organized.

Course Evaluations and Feedback

Your feedback is vital to me as your professor, future students, and the College as a whole. I ask that all students complete evaluations and course surveys. I truly appreciate your time and effort and I will review all feedback provided with care and attention.

Student Resources

I encourage you to take advantage of the various resources available to support your development and success:

- Academic Advising: <http://www.agnesscott.edu/academicadvising>
- The Writing Center: http://writing_center.agnesscott.edu
- The Speaking Center: http://speaking_center.agnesscott.edu
- Counseling and Psychological Services: <http://www.agnesscott.edu/wellnesscenter/caps/index.html>
- McCain Library: <http://library.agnesscott.edu>
- Educational Technology Center: <http://www.agnesscott.edu/its/educational-technology>
- Wellness Center: <http://legacy.agnesscott.edu/studentlife/wellnesscenter>
- Academic Catalog: <http://www.agnesscott.edu/academics/academic-catalog/index.html>
- Academic Calendar: <http://www.agnesscott.edu/registrar/academic-calendar.html>
- Registrar: <http://www.agnesscott.edu/registrar/>
- Student Handbook: <http://www.agnesscott.edu/facultyservices/files/documents/student-handbook.pdf>

Statement on Academic Honesty

The Agnes Scott College honor code embodies an ideal of character, conduct, and citizenship, and is an important part of the College's mission and core identity. This applies especially to academic honesty and integrity. Passing off someone else's work as your own represents intellectual fraud and theft, and violates the core values of our academic community. To be honorable, you should understand not only what counts as academic dishonesty, but also how to avoid engaging in these practices. You should:

- review each course syllabus for the professor's expectations regarding course work and class attendance.
- attribute all ideas taken from other sources; this shows respect for other scholars. Plagiarism can include portraying another's work or ideas as your own, buying a paper online and turning it in as if it were your own work, or not citing or improperly citing references on a reference page or within the text of a paper.
- not falsify or create data and resources or alter a graded work without the prior consent of your professor. This includes making up a reference for a works cited page or making up statistics or facts for academic work.
- not allow another party to do your work/exam, or submit the same or similar work in more than one course without permission from the course instructors. Cheating also includes taking an exam for another person, looking on another person's exam for answers, using exams from previous classes without permission, or bringing and using unauthorized notes or resources (i.e., electronic, written, or otherwise) during an exam.
- not facilitate cheating, which can happen when you help another student complete a take home exam, give answers to an exam, talk about an exam with a student who has not taken it, or collaborate with others on work that is supposed to be completed independently.

- be truthful about the submission of work, which includes the time of submission and the place of submission (e.g., e-mail, online, in a mailbox, to an office, etc.)

You should understand that penalties result from dishonest conduct, ranging from failure of the assignment to expulsion from the college. You should speak with your professors if you need clarification about any of these policies.

Modified Pledge

Students pledge that they have completed assignments honestly by attaching the following statement to each test, quiz, paper, overnight assignment, in-class essay, or other work: *I pledge that I have neither given nor received any unauthorized aid on this assignment.*