

# BEHV4900.012 Syllabus

## Instructor Information

**Professor:** Bryan S. Lovelace MS BCBA LBA

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## Purpose

The purpose of this class is to teach you how use scientific critical thinking to identify media bias, spurious sources, how to spot misinformation and other phenomena including alleged paranormal events, magic, superstition, mystery illness, bogus therapies, and pseudoscience.

## Attendance Policy

- **Class attendance is mandatory**
  - You must sign the attendance sheet to be counted as present in class.
  - If you are late to class by more than 30-minutes, you may be counted absent unless prior arrangements have been made with your instructor.
  - If you leave class early, you may be counted absent unless prior arrangements have been made with your instructor.
  - You may sign the attendance sheet only for yourself.
    - It is considered cheating to sign the attendance sheet for another student.
    - Because your final grade in this course is linked to attendance, cheating will have serious consequences.
- **You are allowed up to 3 unexcused absences in this course.**
  - An unexcused absence is any absence that was not approved by your instructor.
  - You are allowed an unlimited number of excused absences as long as they have been approved by your instructor.
  - At the end of the semester, if you have more than 3 unexcused absence then each additional unexcused absence will lower your final letter grade in this course.
- **You are responsible for keeping tracking your own absences.**
  - Do not ask the instructor how many absences you have accumulated during the semester.
  - Do not ask the instructor if you missed anything when you miss class. The answer is always, "yes".

## Class Rules

- Avoid being critical of the "person" speaking; instead, be critical of what that person "said".
- Do not intentionally insult others with whom you disagree.

- If you have a question or comment that is relevant to the discussion, please ask it during class and avoid waiting until class is over to ask your question.
- If you are offended by something in this course, please talk to me about it.
- It is okay for you to disagree with the instructor and others in this course, but all debate and argument must remain civil and productive.

## Disclaimer

- Topics discussed in this course will make you uncomfortable and many of you will be offended by the material.
- All topics are fair game, including religion, politics, and other hot button topics you aren't supposed to discuss in polite company.
- We will question commonly held beliefs that some people (many people) believe should not be questioned.
- This course promotes methodological naturalism, empiricism, and reason as tools for discovering the truth.
- Colorful language, explicit topics, and materials may be presented in this course and may appear at any time without warning.
- If you are not okay with this, the instructor will ask you to drop the course.

## Assignments

- Unit Quizzes | x3 | 100 points each | 300 points total
- Bonus Questions | x3 | 10 points each | 30 points total
- Total Possible Points | 330

## Grading

- A = 270 - 330
- B = 240 - 269
- C = 210 - 239
- D = 180 - 209
- F = 179 or less

## Course Content

### Part I

- **Features of Language**
  - Verbosity & Jargon
  - Vagueness
  - Loaded Language & Circular Arguments
  - Understatements & Overstatements
  - Ambiguity
  - Synonymy
  - Figurative Language

- **Topical Relevance**
  - Direct vs Indirect Questions
  - Refusing to Answer
  - Irrelevant Emotional Appeals
  - Ignoring the Issue
  - Fallacies of Relevance
- **Unit Quiz I**

## Part II

- **Media Bias**
  - How to Spot Misinformation
  - How to Spot Hidden Media Bias
  - Media Bias Class Activity
  - Lifecycle of a Cyber Harassment Campaign
  - Professors & Cancel Culture
  - NPR Coverage of Kyle Rittenhouse Case
- **Unit Quiz II**

## Part III

- **Groupthink**
  - Illusion of Invulnerability
  - Illusion of Morality
  - Collective Rationalization
  - Excessive Stereotyping
  - Pressure for Conformity
  - Self-Censorship
  - Illusion of Unanimity
  - Mind-Guarding
- **Pseudo Disciplines**
  - Emergence of Postmodern Feminism
  - The Science Wars
  - Emergence of Grievance Studies
  - Critical Theory
  - Obelton v Gibson
  - The Evergreen Story
- **Unit Quiz III**