Introduction
First, an introduction to your professors...

Molly Roberts

Stefan Savage
...and your TA

Katherine Izhikevich
Course questions

- What is the scope of the misinformation/disinformation problem
  - What “counts”? How prevalent is it? Do people believe it?

- What makes people susceptible to misinformation
  - Psychological factors, societal factors, political factors

- What are the commercial incentives?
  - For spreading misinformation? For creating misinformation?

- The role of International players in disinformation activites

- The role of technology in enabling disinformation

- Does misinformation impact political behavior?

- The theory of different interventions and their effectiveness
  - Content-based, fact checking, media literacy

- To be clear: we don’t know the answers here, this is a class where we will all be learning
Note: course Web page

- [https://cseweb.ucsd.edu/~savage/cse291-wi23/](https://cseweb.ucsd.edu/~savage/cse291-wi23/)
  - Linked to from both Canvas pages (CSE291/DSC 291)

- All material/updates/etc will be via this page
Readings and Discussion

- This is a reading and discussion class

- We’ll be reading material from across a range of disciplines
  - Political science, quantitative sociology, communications theory, behavioral psychology, data science & computer science, etc
  - Roughly two pages per class (3rd paper to skim on Tuesdays)

- Discussion: this class does not work unless it's interactive.
  - Questions, thoughts, conclusions, concerns...
  - Please only take the class if you feel confident you can do this
Tentative structure

- Tues/Thus we will lecture on core topics for first half to 2/3 of class
- Reminder of class period
  - Tuesdays: group presentation of focused paper (will be listed in syllabus)
  - Thursdays: group exploration of open research questions and research design ideas/challenges
Aside: Guest speakers

- We may have some guest speakers (TBD) with expertise in particular sub-areas
- Since guest speaker schedules are the least flexible, we may move things around/compress to accommodate their availability
Your responsibilities

▪ Readings and discussion (every class)
  – Be prepared to discuss, question, critique the readings each class

▪ Individual “research assessments” each week (due each Wed)
  – Look at papers assigned for week and identify what you think
    ▪ What you think are the key open research problems
    ▪ Design/propose a single experiment, measurement, analysis that might be performed to explore one of these questions
  – One page written, due 10pm Wed eve (but not this Wed)
  – We will incorporate these into discussion on Thursday class

▪ Group paper presentation (once during quarter)
  – We will assign paper groups (please fill out Google form with topic preferences by tmw)
  – Lead paper discussion during 2nd portion of Tuesday class

▪ Group research project (once at end of quarter)
Group research project

- You’ll form groups (3-4 people) and together will conduct a unique self-defined research project around some focused question concerning misinformation
  - To be clear: this is not a literature review, but new research using empirical data

- Examples
  - What are demographic correlates in engagement with different kinds of misinformation?
  - How much do misinformation sites synchronize messages and share targets?
  - Survey study of users belief/interpretation of contradictory news stories
  - Impact of twitter “user information” on retweets?
  - Effectiveness of educational interventions?

- Paper (~6-10 pgs) and quick 10-15 minute presentation in final week
Questions?
Exploring definitions

▪ What is misinformation? Disinformation? Fake news? Rumor?
  – What are necessary/sufficient conditions?
  – How to distinguish?
Exploring consequences

- Why do we care about misinformation or disinformation?
- How do we decide if we should care?
For next class

▪ Please fill out (by Wed) Google Form on topic preferences
  – Its on Course web page

▪ Please read:
  – (both are linked on Course Web page)