

CSE 599B:

Technology-Enabled Misinformation

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Today's Plan

1. Some Examples
2. Course Overview
3. Introductions
4. Instructions for Assignments 1 and 2


“War of the Worlds” Radio Broadcast





<https://youtu.be/Xs0K4ApWl4g?t=11m01s>






#ColumbianChemicals


- Coordinated disinformation campaign
 - Text message alerts
 - Bots on Twitter
 - False Wikipedia page
 - Facebook page for fake “Louisiana News”
 - YouTube video

**GregSpicy**
@GregSpicy



The explosion occurred at the [#ColumbianChemicals](#) Co. Chemical plant located in Centerville, St. Mary Parish, LA.


 Reply  Retweet  Favorite  Instapaper  More

 EDITION: INTERNATIONAL | U.S. | MÉXICO | ARABIC
TV: CNN | CNN en Español
Set edition preference

Home Video World U.S. Africa Asia Europe Latin America Middle East Business World Sp


September 11, 2014 • Updated 1310 GMT (2110 HKT) Edited by Peter Wilkinson in London


EDITOR'S CHOICE Scenes from the field • Pistorius verdict • ISIS threat • Apple Watch • Scotland vote


**Obama: 'We will degrade, ultimately destroy' ISIS**
"Difficult speech" for Barack Obama: President announces U.S. airstrikes will hit targets in war-ravaged Syria as well as Iraq. FULL STORY


- Obama's address, as it happened
- Watch the full address
- Obama: 'ISIL is not Islamic'

ISIS ADDRESS ANALYZED


**Plant Explosion in Centerville Caused Panic**
The plant explosion at Columbian Chemicals Company, Centerville, LA, caused the wave of panic among the residents of the nearest towns.

**Murder verdict: How the judge will decide**

**Pistorius: Triumph and tragedy mark life**

**Meet woman deciding Oscar Pistorius' fate**

RETWEETS 637 FAVORITE 1



5:57 PM - 11 Sep 2014 [Flag media](#)

Facebook Influence Campaigns

One of these posts was from a genuine Facebook page that supports feminism, and the other was part of an influence campaign. Can you guess which post is from a fake page?



False Video

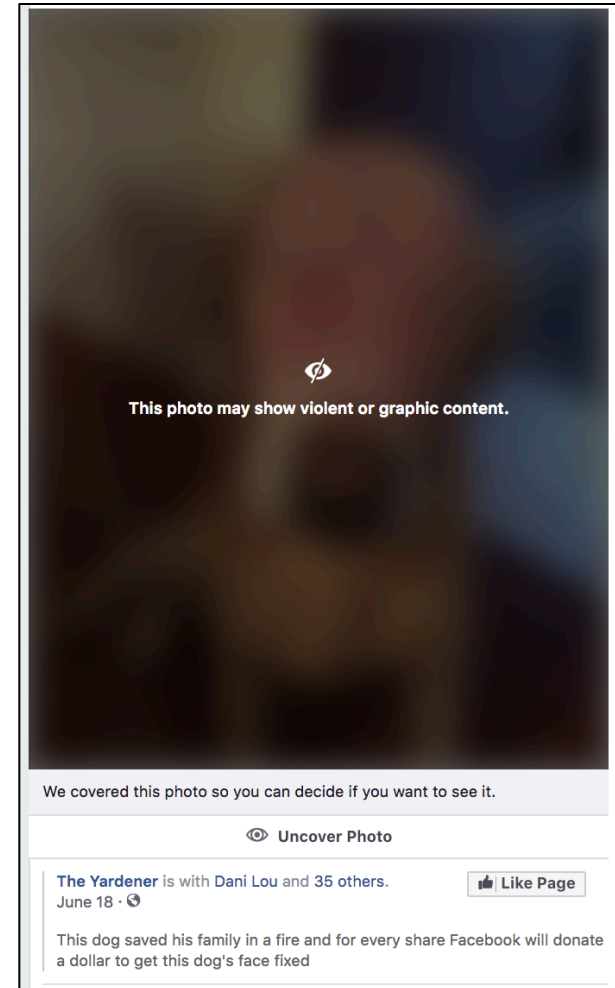
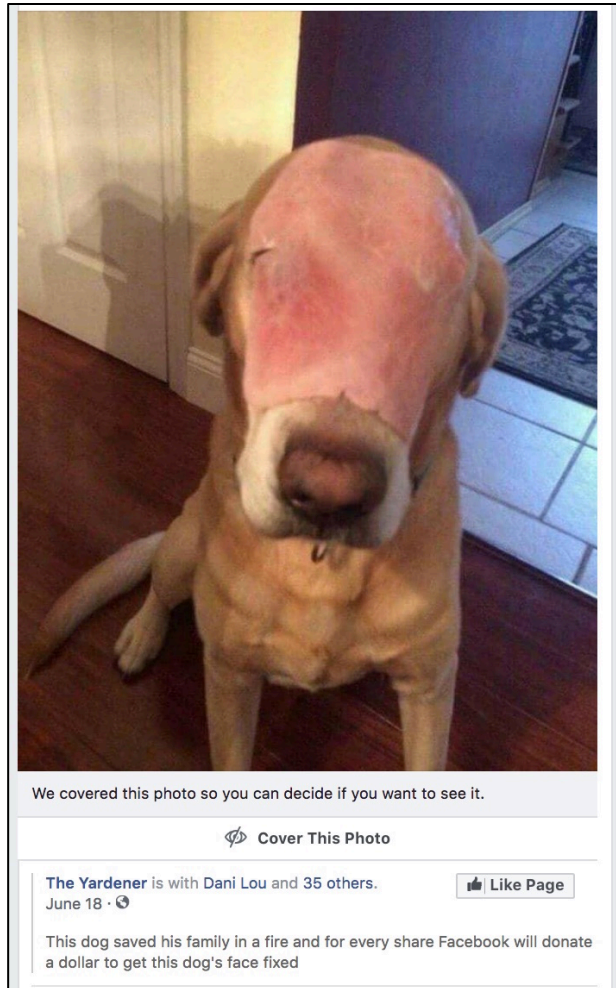
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cQ54GDm1eL0>

[Cougar Football](#) | [Cougars](#) | [Pac-12](#) | [Sports](#)

WSU coach Mike Leach tweets fake Barack Obama video, stirs up a Twitter storm

Originally published June 18, 2018 at 10:41 am | *Updated June 18, 2018 at 11:08 am*

Example from my Newsfeed



Serious Consequences

Facebook uncovers disinformation campaign to influence US midterms

Social network removes 32 pages and accounts for 'co-ordinated inauthentic behaviour'

Hannah Kuchler in San Francisco and Demetri Sevastopulo in Washington JULY 31, 2018

How WhatsApp Destroyed A Village

In July, residents of a rural Indian town saw rumors of child kidnappers on WhatsApp. Then they beat five strangers to death.



Pranav Dixit
BuzzFeed News Reporter



Ryan Mac
BuzzFeed News Reporter



Reporting From
New Delhi

Posted on September 9, 2018, at 9:00 p.m. ET

Misinformation:

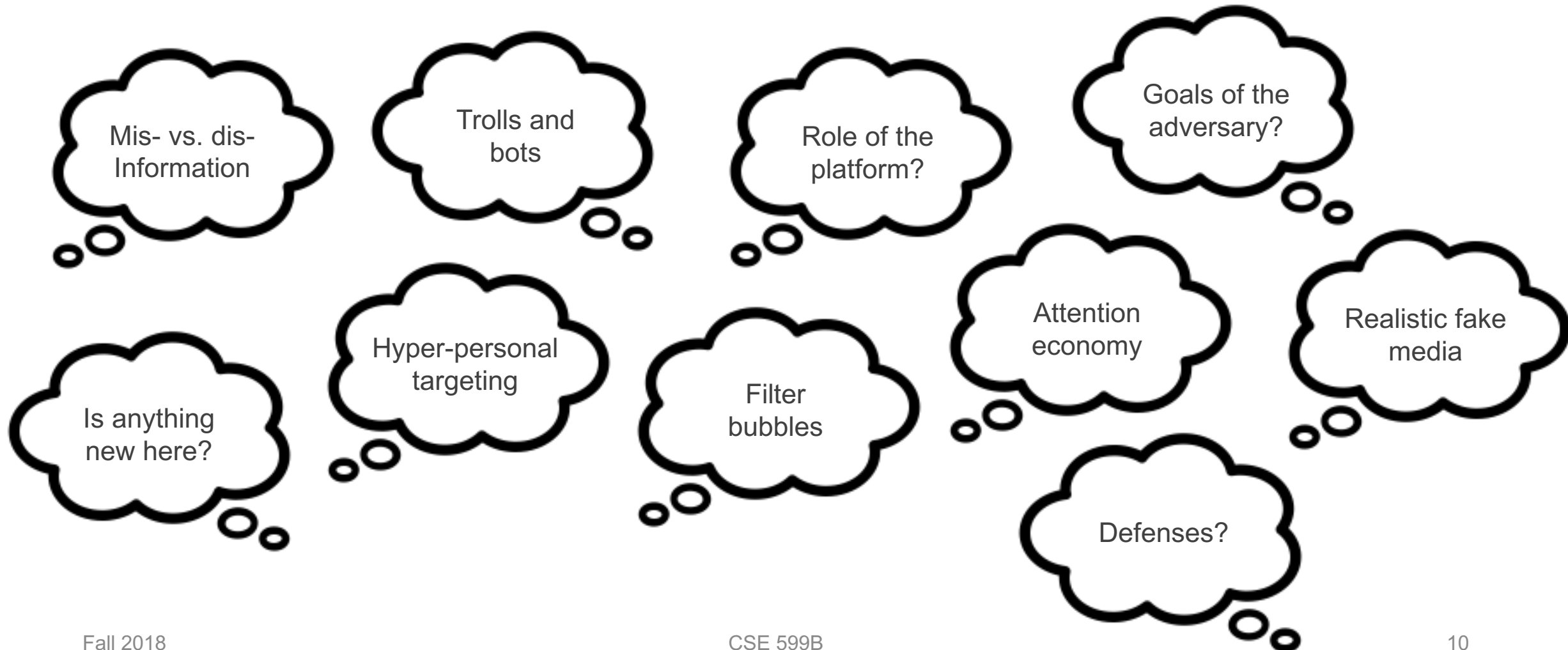
Information whose inaccuracy
is *unintentional*.

Disinformation:

Information that is *deliberately*
false or misleading.

Definitions from Data & Society's "Lexicon of Lies"

So much going on!



Course Scope and General Plan

- Mis/disinformation is a large, complex problem space
 - Technology, sociology, psychology, politics, neuroscience, ...
- **This is a computer science course** (and only 10 weeks)
 - *In general*, we will focus on technical questions / technology
 - (1) How do today's technologies and platforms create and enable these issues?
 - (2) How can technical approaches be used to help mitigate them?
- **Please be respectful of others**
 - Avoid political commentary, blaming the user, etc.

Course Scope and General Plan

- **Planned topics:**
 - Mis/disinformation definitions and case studies
 - Measuring the problem
 - Enabling technologies
 - Defenses
- **Exploratory, research-focused course**
 - Readings and discussions
 - Project is major component
 - Exploring this rapidly evolving space together

Class Resources

Website:

<https://courses.cs.washington.edu/courses/cse599b/18au/>

Google Group (discussion board):

<https://groups.google.com/a/cs.washington.edu/forum/#!forum/cse599b-misinformation-18au-discussion>

Canvas: grades and non-discussion-board submissions

Grading

- 50%: Project
 - 5%: Proposal
 - 7%: Checkpoint writeup+presentation
 - 8%: Draft
 - 15%: Oral presentation
 - 15%: Final report
- 20%: Other assignments and in-class presentations
- 20%: Reading discussion board posts
- 10%: Class participation

Discussion Board Posts

- Due at 8am before every class
 - You have 2 “freebies”
- Short: 1-3 paragraphs (address all the readings)
- **Say something original!** For example:
 - Reading summary, key points
 - Evaluation, opinions, response to others' opinions
 - Questions for discussion, responses to others' questions
 - Open research questions
 - Broader implications, relationships with previous readings
- Graded on scale of 0-2

Project

- Groups of 2-3 people (talk to me for exceptions)
- Milestones throughout the quarter (see website)
 - 1st milestone: Project groups due **October 5**
 - 2nd milestone: Project proposals due **October 12**
 - Week of **October 15**: Plan to meet with me
- Possible types of projects:
 - Attacks, Measurements, User Studies, Defenses, etc.
- Strive for great, publication-worthy projects

Introductions

On the notecards, please write down your:

- Name
- Pronoun
- Year in program
- Research area
- What brings you to this course
- Anything else you'd like me to know

Assignments

- We will periodically have small assignments
 - Goal is not to take a lot of time, but to bring richness to our conversations and distribute our efforts exploring the space
- **Assignment 1: Personal Experience (due 8am Friday)**
 - Personal experience of a false post or news story
 - See website for details
 - Post to discussion board by 8am on Friday

Case Studies

Assignment 2: Mis/disinformation case study (due 8am Wed)

- Individually or in groups of 2
- See website for details & examples; feel free to choose others
- **Post your choice to discussion board ASAP**; if your choice has already been posted, please make a different choice
- Prepare 5-7 minute (a few slides) presentation for **next Wednesday (October 3)**

Next Time

- Mis/disinformation overview
 - Readings and discussion – see course schedule
 - Assignment 1 discussion