

CARLETON UNIVERSITY
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY AND ANTHROPOLOGY

SOCI 4850B
WINTER 2023
MEDIA SOCIOLOGY: MEDIA AND TRUTH

Course Description

A liberal democracy grounds in truth and, per the *Washington Post*, “Democracy Dies in Darkness.” The purpose of the course is to arrive at a definition of truth given the media environment. The course considers some core ideas, theories and processes that help define truth. Topics may include propaganda, news, the news media and its effects; film, media and technology; art and fiction. The goal is to develop reasonably well-founded opinions regarding how media, of all sort, including the ownership, content control and presentation, portray truth, given the general principles of Sociology and Social Psychology. You offer the opinions you develop through an in-class presentation, seminar participation, an essay and a final take-home examination. Sociology cuts a wide swath in SOCI 4850B. For example, the readings suggest who owns what media effects content decisions and usage. Such facts demand critical attention. Our concern is how this model and its cognates, its agents, affect truth. Social Psychology also comes into play. Media usage is the intersection of society and individual. Media cohere to provide images and ideas that urge users to embrace media goals, such as Huxleyan conformity or consumerism, in the social, political and consumer realms, impede social progress, limit the general good and impair truth. When considering 4850B, please keep in mind it is media AND truth. The course is driven by student presentations and visits by expert guests.