**Lesson Overview – Evaluating Claims: Facebook Edition**

**Learning Objectives**

* Students will construct various search phrases for use in online and library search tools
* Students will use certain evaluation criteria (e.g. CRAAP) to assess the credibility of online sources
* Students will identify specific library resources (e.g. databases) relevant to the field of study or content area of claims in which to search
* Students will examine sources for relevance to their research question and search need (specifically, to determine credibility of claims)

**Performance Task**

Students will be expected to find evidence to investigate a pseudoscientific claim or conspiracy theory. For their graded assignment, they will be submitting a two-page paper to their Chemistry professor (the lead professor for this class in which I’m embedding). In their paper, they make a case that either supports the claim or rejects it. They will be expected to use both library and credible online sources for support.

**Guided Instruction**

Content will be uploaded into their online course shell (in the course management system) for them to view **prior to an in-person library session**. This will include a short library orientation video and another short using library resources video – both of which I created in the last year.

Students will attend a face-to-face library session – a full 75-minute class.

1. Students will review the**Evaluating Claims: Facebook Edition** assignment expectations. Then they will be asked to explaineach **Intellectual Standard** (this is covered by the lead instructor in a prior class) and how they will exhibit it in their investigation. Intellectual Standards handout will be provided to students. (See [www.criticalthinking.org](http://www.criticalthinking.org) for the Paul-Elder Critical Thinking Society’s resources including the Universal Intellectual Standards.)

The following is an example prompt:

* 1. Ask "What is Clarity?"
  2. Ask “How can research help you clarify the claim you're investigating?”

The duration for this is about 10 minutes.

1. Students will learn how to use library databases to investigate an example claim in the F2F library session. This will be a 20-minute demonstration/ guided activity in which students explore an example claim (vaccines cause autism) through two databases: Gale Virtual Reference Library and Academic Search Complete.

In a follow-up independent activity (approximately 20 minutes of the same F2F class), they will analyze/interpretthe results of using different search terms for searches in a library database.

* Students will be given five minutes to search Gale Virtual Reference Library using an example claim. Students will answer the prompt: *What are some example search phrases that yielded good results for you?* on an index card.

**Assignment Instructions**

A Facebook friend of yours has posted one of the following claims. A debate ensues on the comment threads and your friend tags you to support him/her. You are unsure whether or not there is evidence to back it up.

* The Holocaust didn't occur – or the Holocaust, as generally reported and believed to be true, is a lie.
* 9/11 - the terrorist attack on the World Trade Center that occurred on 9/11/2001 - is a hoax or was a conspiracy orchestrated by the US government.
* The US did not land on the moon as reported in 1969.
* The Earth is flat.
* Intelligent Design – or the belief that a single intelligent creator designed the universe – is a valid scientific theory to explain the universe.
* Crystals have healing properties.
* Acupuncture can treat or heal sickness, illness, or disease.
* Homeopathy can treat or heal sickness, illness, or disease.
* Ancient aliens visited the planet and made contributions to humanity and/or history.
* Throughout history and in the present day, extraterrestrials (aliens) have abducted human beings.
* Ghosts exist.
* *Feng Shui – or the arrangement of furniture according to Chinese philosophy – can positively or negatively impact your wealth, health, happiness, and prosperity. - Class example*
* *President John F. Kennedy was not assassinated by Lee Harvey Oswald – or his assassination is the result of a conspiracy of various entities and agents. - Class example*
* Bigfoot, or Sasquatch, exists.
* Vaccines cause autism.

You will be expected to find evidence to either support the claim or reject the claim. You will further be expected to explain how you came to your conclusion and why the sources you've consulted are credible.

You are presenting your evidence supporting/ rejecting the claim to your friend. You will present your findings in a two-page paper formatted in MLA style (8th edition). In your paper, you will either defend the claim using evidence from your sources *or* reject the claim using evidence from your sources. Throughout your paper, you will use your sources as references by either quoting or paraphrasing from them.

The sources you list in your Works Cited/ References page must withstand critical evaluation and appraisal.

* At least six sources will be referenced throughout your paper and listed in the Works Cited section.
* At least one source will come from a supporter of the claim. At least one source will come from a detractor of the claim – or someone skeptical of the claim.
* At least three sources will come from library databases.
* At least one source will be a video essay, documentary video, or other audio-visual format. (These can be found on library databases *and/or* online.)
* *Only sources you reference by quoting or paraphrasing within your paper get listed in the Works CIted list. If you do not refer to the source in the paper – explicitly – it will not appear in your references list.*