

What Is Taught in Schools of Journalism?

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Global Research, August 29, 2023

Region: [USA](#)

Theme: [History](#)

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"Propaganda is the executive arm of the invisible government." -[Edward Bernays, Propaganda](#)

"I truly do not understand what has happened to journalism." -[Alex Berenson](#)

The big lie perpetrated about journalism is that it has an adversarial relationship with power. There may have been some truth to that at some point in history, but within living memory the precise opposite has been the truth. And why be surprised? One would expect that controlling the Narrative and the flow of information would be a prime goal of government.

Governments ultimately become tyrannical, as history teaches. Where a vacuum exists, nature fills it, and if that vacuum is one of political power, those least contained by moral restraint have the greatest advantage in filling the void. Over time, restraints diminish within government itself, as its influences within mainstream media (MSM) become increasingly dominant. And if you doubt that this level of tyranny has hit home, consider this [report of two months ago](#) from the House Judiciary Committee and the Select Subcommittee on the Weaponization of the Federal Government.

Governments have interests separate from those of the governed, and for them to function with minimal interference they influence to the extent possible mainstream media, both print and electronic. Those connecting government and the public call themselves journalists, and for the most part they get their training in college-level schools of journalism.

Journalism at the University of Wisconsin

Now, get this: In 2021, the University of Wisconsin's School of Journalism and Mass Communication (its formal title) was given a [\\$750,000 grant](#) by a subdivision of the National Science Foundation (NSF) known as "[Convergence Accelerator](#)". The grant is based on governmental concern of public skepticism regarding the official narratives of the Covid19

Pandemic and the integrity of the 2020 Presidential election, two of the most contentious issues in US history, both in crying need of open discussion and debate, both actively censored by MSM. The focus of the grant is to develop methods for overcoming skepticism of official accounts — specifically of these two issues — as found in social media. According to the [Grant Abstract](#), the project is funded to “deliver” a 3-step method:

1. Identify social media sources circulating “misinformation” and online communities susceptible to such “misinformation”.
2. Working with fact-checking organizations, develop “correction” and “intervention messages” to counter vaccine hesitancy and electoral skepticism.
3. Disseminate “corrections” (e.g. via ads, automated bots, “influencers”) and evaluate their effectiveness.

Think hard about that. It is in no way “journalism” as normally (and wishfully) understood, or as claimed, but naked, in-your-face propagandizing in the service of governmental power, in this case using the services of a publicly funded institution of “higher learning”. It makes one wonder what on earth journalism students at the UW are being taught. Just the fact that faculty would be involved in such a project would, in itself, be a message louder than any course students might take. In any event, the results of this project should be available at the NSF website in December, 2023.

The premise of the UW grant is that governmental narratives regarding Covid19 and 2020 Presidential election are *ipso facto* absolutely accurate, and that competing information, opinion or interpretation must therefore be understood as misinformation to be refuted or censored. Why? Well, apparently because it’s the Government. As for those who accept the official drumbeat that the election was honest, it might be worth a few minutes spent [here](#), [here](#), [here](#), [here](#), [here](#), [here](#). There’s more, of course. In addition, valid medical information countering governmental “public health” messaging, and the endless repetition of “safe and effective” re the Covid19 vaccine, can be found [here](#), [here](#), [here](#), [here](#), [here](#), [here](#).

Journalism at the University of Washington

The [Center For An Informed Public](#) at the University of Washington’s [Information School](#) also received — and also in 2021 — an NSF [grant of \\$2.25 million](#) to “develop and evaluate ‘rapid response’ methods for studying and communicating about disinformation at a sophistication and pace on par with the dynamic and interdisciplinary nature of the challenge” (Grant details [here](#)). The goal of this grant corresponds to that of the U of WI grant (above) and, likewise, the spotlighted issues are the 2020 Election and Covid19.

While the grant does not terminate until 2026, in 2022 an article appeared in Nature Human Behavior, [“Combining interventions to reduce the spread of viral misinformation”](#), in which three of the authors are funded by this NSF grant, the article indicating the direction of their research: “We reveal that commonly proposed interventions [eg ‘outright removal’] are unlikely to be effective in isolation. However, our framework demonstrates that a combined approach can achieve a substantial reduction in the prevalence of misinformation.”

Among the combined approaches they study, in addition to account removal, are “nudges” [messaging/warning to influence decisions of users of social media], interruption of “sharing

behavior”, and what they term “virality circuit breakers”, an elaborate system that identifies and “disrupts” sources of “misinformation”, particularly from those they identify as repeat spreaders. Details consider various time spans between identification of “misinformation” and response time, because speed of response is for them a significant factor in obstructing the spread of unwanted information and opinion. Admitting that outright censorship has “public relation challenges”, what they devise is a multi-pronged system of information interference and slowdown that amounts to piecemeal censorship. It’s rather like the principle of ‘death by a thousand cuts’.

The Center For An Informed Public was a founder in 2020 of the [Election Integrity Partnership](#) [oh the irony!], the [Stanford Internet Observatory](#) being the other founder. The Partnership’s stated purpose is to counter “... *attempts to suppress voting, reduce participation, confuse voters, or delegitimize election results without evidence*”, but obviously their major concern is the last of these, i.e. “*The metanarrative of a ‘stolen election’, which later propelled the January 6 insurrection.*”

Election Integrity Partnership boldly clarifies its status as servant to governmental authority in listing factors influencing the capacity for “virality of misinformation” online: “*Another factor that mediates the spread of rumors is the availability of timely, quality information from trusted sources — e.g., media and government officials*”. One wonders at the fact that people in such positions could be so ignorant of the present level of public distrust of both mainstream media and government. The first recommendation in their 2021 [Final Report](#) is “*Federal Government: Establish clear authorities and roles for identifying election-related mis- and disinformation.*”

In all of this, there seems little inclination to explore who exactly within government enjoys the right to determine what is or isn’t mis- or disinformation, how they came by this authority, or what might be their motives. There is no apparent awareness that the popular theory regarding journalism is that it’s fundamentally about reporting information to a public that, on its own, can then discuss and debate openly to determine what truth there is in it all. And certainly there is no appreciation of the free speech rights of those who have been labeled as spreaders of unwanted information and opinion.

These are just the tip of an immense iceberg, and should you make an effort to research this issue, taking it to wherever the facts lead, what you find should make your blood boil regardless of where you are on any political spectrum. The First Amendment is being trashed on multiple fronts. There is wide understanding that something is rotten in the state of journalism, and schools of journalism are a key part of that rot.

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