

MALS 667, HOW TO READ AN ELECTION

Partial Reading List

In case anyone would like to start reading early, the book-based assignments for this course are listed below in the order in which they'll be due. Because these books are all best-sellers readily available anywhere, I haven't placed an order with the university bookstore. Please feel free to purchase your books from the vendor of your choice.

Weekly assignments will also include watching TED talks and other lectures on YouTube, as well as reading or watching other short online material. As soon as the Canvas website for this course becomes available, I'll start posting links to those additional readings/viewings.

Because of the topical nature of this course, it doesn't make sense to try to finalize all the readings in advance. As you'll see, the book-based assignments below represent less than the usual reading load for a graduate course, intentionally leaving room for us to explore material (e.g., news stories, opinion pieces, and social media storms) directly relevant to whatever is going on in the election in real time.

In addition to the reading assignments, the course will include two four- to six-page papers as well as a take-home essay final exam.

Daniel Kahneman, *Thinking, Fast and Slow*. We'll discuss this book for two consecutive weeks, focusing on Chapters 1, 2, 8, 10, 13, 19, 27, 32, 34, 35, and 36. The selected chapters cover aspects of human thought particularly relevant to understanding our responses to political rhetoric.

Daniel Levitin, *Weaponized Lies*. We'll focus on Part 1: "Plausibility," "Fun with Averages," and "Hijinks with How Numbers are Reported;" all of Part 2; and Part 3, "How Science Works" and "Logical Fallacies." The selected sections offer suggestions for critically analyzing the kinds of evidence typically presented by campaigns.

Paul Offit, *Pandora's Lab*. We'll focus on Chapters 2, 4, 6, 7, and 8. These chapters were chosen for their emphasis on the role of popular culture and media in spreading erroneous ideas on scientific topics.

George Orwell, *1984*. As I'm sure you know, *1984* is widely regarded as *the* iconic novel of post-truth dystopia.

Christopher Chabris and Daniel Simons, *The Invisible Gorilla*. This book, which we'll discuss in its entirety over two weeks, is a good wrap-up for the course because it both reviews and expands upon earlier readings on how people can be deceived, or deceive ourselves, by not thinking critically.