Government 2017-2018, Fall Semester

Essay #2: Fake News

 Mr. Mace

Due: 15 Dec 17 Full Credit

Without good information, you cannot make good decisions. This is the same as the old computer saying; Garbage In, Garbage Out. Mainstream news sources such as CNN, MSNBC, FOX, ABC, CBS, NBC have been telling us that the 2016 Presidential Election was compromised by fake news from Russian sources that wanted Donald Trump in the White House. Is this true? Have we been duped by bad actors that want to disrupt our society? Or is there a more sinister motivation to control society? Can we trust what we read, see, and hear? Are there any trustworthy news sources? Are we now in an echo chamber we cannot get out of? Is the Mainstream media the true fake news, and the alternative press the solution? Question: How much of our news is real, how much is fake, how can we tell, and how can you get the Truth, and should we change our methods of getting news to reduce bad, misleading, or fake news? Or is this even possible? (Consider the First Amendment)

1. Opening: Fake news and consequences.
    a. Opening Paragraph: Anecdote, data, poem, quote, something to get readers attention
    b. Thesis (remember to underline)
2. Main Body
    a. Effects of Fake News on society
        i. Democracy
        ii. The Economy
        iii. Daily Living
    b. Bad News
        i. Opinion vs Fact
            1. Personal blogs as primary source or ideological trap?
            2. One person's fact is another person's opinion
        ii. Misreported, switching victim and perpetrator, cause and effect
        iii. Unchecked facts, reporting hearsay and rumor
        iv. Poorly written, confusing the issue
        v. Unintentional, yet may cause explosion of misunderstanding
    c. Misleading News
        i. Bias: (is bias always present?)
            1. One side only
        ii. Missing details and facts: (Omitted on purpose or by accident?)
        iii. Suggestive language: (manufacturing consent?)
        iv. Unsupported conclusions: (deliberately leading or just logical fallacy?)
        v. Lies of omission: (does this happen often?)
            1. Censorship: (How do you know if this is happening?)

d. Fake News
   i. Deliberate distortions: (We are fighting Isis! (then why are we helping them?))
   ii. False information: (Saddam Hussein has weapons of mass destruction)
   iii. Propaganda: (Russia Bad, U.S. Good! Socialists Bad, Capitalists Good!)
   iv. Conflation: (ex. Single payer health care leads to communism!)
   v. Conspiracy or Truth?: (9/11, JFK assassination, UFOs, Bigfoot, Illuminati)
   vi. Filtering: (should Facebook and Google decide what fake news is, and keep you from seeing it?)
e. Corporate Ownership
   i. Six Major Media Companies in U.S. (90% of what you read, watch, or listen to)
      1. GE: Comcast, NBC, Universal, Focus
      2. News Corp: Fox, Wall Street Journal, New Your Post
      3. Disney: ABC, ESPN, PIXAR, Miramax, Marvel
      4. Viacom: MTV, Nick Jr., BET, CMT, Paramount
      5. Time Warner: CNN, HBO, TIME, Warner Bros.
      6. CBS: Showtime, Smithsonian, NFL.com, Jeopardy, 60 Minutes
   ii. Are their interests your interests?
   iii. Are they showing the news, or creating a narrative for you to follow?
f. The Echo Chamber
   i. Selection of new sources
      1. Do we only believe what we already agree with?
      2. Left facts vs Right facts, MSNBC vs FOX (does CNN have a horse in this race?)
      3. Washington Bubble (do politicians only see themselves?)
   ii. Analytics, the science of data analysis
      1. Are you reduced to an equation?
      2. Do Facebook and Google know you better than you do?
   iii. Google
   iv. Facebook
3. Conclusion
   a. Restate thesis
   b. Wrap up ideas and themes

1. Make sure to include citations *every time you use a statement or an idea from the readings that I have provided, or that you found in your own independent research.* Use APA citation notation (found on website). Using others work without providing proper citation is plagiarism and grounds for immediate failure on this essay.
2. Papers should be 2400-3000 words and 8-10 pages in length in Times New Roman or Ariel 12 point font, double spaced, pages numbered, cover page optional, references on last page (as per APA notation), 1 inch borders on top/bottom and left/right, stapled (no covers or binders). Be sure to include name and period.
3. Underline your Thesis.
4. Please type all work on a computer.