

MEDIA ROLES AND RESPONSES TO PANDEMICS

Integrative Studies Concentration only

The COVID-19 pandemic presents a number of critical challenges to journalism and social media: How we get accurate information in the midst of a public health crisis, how do we evaluate it, and how do we warn the public about the dangers of the plague without causing needless panic? In terms of media literacy, the pandemic exposed the danger of unreliable information on the Internet (both the "Plandemic" video, filled with falsehoods, and a viral news report out of Fresno where two urgent care physicians with no training in epidemiology downplayed the seriousness of the virus are particularly chilling examples). Journalists, meanwhile, have been forced to reassess who and what they cover.

On the national level, President Donald Trump turned his daily press briefings about the virus into a kind of national campaign appearance. What responsibility does the press have to cover such an event? More locally, a group of men in camouflage and brandishing rifles showed up on the steps of the state capitol to protest the Governor's quarantine. Did the media get drawn into a glorified photo op? Or was this a legitimate news story? Ultimately, the courses in this concentration will include assignments about the relationship between information and public health.

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Code	Title	Credit Hours
Select 4 courses from the following:		12
COMM 365	Health Communication	
JASS 330	Feature Writing	
JASS 331	Multimedia Journalism	
JASS 334	Science and Environmental Journalism ¹	

¹ Prerequisite JASS 2015 required.