

Course Journal

YOUR NAME

2025-09-09

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1 Journal Home

This journal renders as a **book**. Each dated entry is a chapter.

- **MC 451 entries:** 250–300 words
- At the **end of each chapter** you'll see **three prompts. Answer only one.**
- Write your answer in the **Response** box; the page shows an **automatic word count** and whether you're in range.

1.0.1 Add a new entry

1. In R, run: `source("scripts/new_journal_entry.R")`
2. A new chapter like `entries/2025-09-01.qmd` appears with three prompts injected.
3. The script updates `_quarto.yml` so the new entry is included in the book.
4. Render the book: click **Render** in RStudio or run `quarto render`.

2 2025-09-09-week2

2.1 Choose one prompt to answer

Prompt A: Think about a claim you've seen online that you weren't sure was true. How would the principles of empiricism and control help you design a study to test whether it was accurate?

2.2 Response

There are a lot of sports news outlets, whether on Instagram or Twitter, that purposely report false news. The posts can consist of trades, media quotes, or other nonsense that the account will create to get online reaction and views. Oftentimes, the posts lean more on the side of nonsensical and ridiculous. However, to an uneducated viewer, or someone caught in a doom-scroll, these posts may pass as the truth.

Using empiricism, I would rely on direct evidence or observation. While Instagram may qualify as "evidence" in some instances, the source plays a big role. Users should be aware of account users as to whether or not to rely on them as quality evidence. Furthermore, rather than relying simply on Instagram, a user can go to external websites to use empiricism to fact check sports news. For instance, if I saw a trade offer on Instagram, I would first want to check the account that posted the trade. If the account is not something reliable like ESPN or Sports Center, it would be a good idea to go to ESPN's online website to see if there is any posting about the particular trade.

Furthermore, if a fan of a certain sports team were to see a fake trade or quote about a player, their previous observations and knowledge about the organization could provide evidence as to why the claim may be false. Direct observation is another form of empiricism.

Control in this context means making sure I'm not misled by outside factors like fake accounts, fan-made trades, or unreliable sources. I want to control bias and information and this could be done by comparing different social media accounts. Similar to empiricism, if the news was not posted by an authorized organization or account, I am likely to be misled. Some accounts post fan-made trades or clip interviews of players to misconstrue what they are saying. Thus,

even though a video could technically be alive recording, the video may be edited to convey a different message, which is why it is even more important to have verified sources that display real scripts and quotes of what players say. However, just because a quote is visible online does not mean it is a verified source. Websites like reddit or Twitter can also misconstrue quotes and information, which is once again why sources like ESPN or SportsCenter should be the main source of reliable information for sports. This also applies to comments on posts. Comments on posts should not be seen as credible. To see the truth of a claim it is better to go to multiple verified sources to confirm news or data.

While there is no way to completely avoid seeing false news on the internet, there are ways to be aware of what you are taking and viewing. Using empiricism and control gives users tools to eliminate false information by providing methods to fact check information. These methods include checking verified sources and going off of observation.

2.3 Word Count & Range Check

****Word count:**** 499

****Required range (MC501):**** 450-500 words

****Status:**** In range