

Disinformation in EU Politics and Artificial Intelligence

Instructor: CARNAÚBA, Igor

Course Coded: IRB143

2025/2016 I.

The course aims to introduce students into the study the political impact of disinformation through artificial intelligence in EU politics. Together, we will try to answer the following questions: How can we identify and tackle disinformation in EU politics? What are the current adversities when dealing with disinformation in- and outside the EU? What are the AI tools that are used for disinformation in EU Politics?

The class debates will explore disinformation in the European Union, beginning with its definition, key mechanisms, and the tools used to spread and combat it within EU institutions. We examine both foreign and internal misinformation networks, analyzing their impact on political processes and public opinion. Additionally, we discuss countermeasures, including legal frameworks and ethical dilemmas surrounding the regulation of disinformation.

Special attention will be paid on the main evaluation for this course, in which students will represent a Member State and simulate disinformation in EU politics under artificial intelligence based on different political ideologies and tactics.

Classes will be held entirely in English.

Thursdays 14h – 15h30

Course syllabus

11 th of September	Syllabus presentation; division of classes in pairs for subject project evaluation
18 th of September	<p>Introduction to Disinformation and Misinformation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Definitions, types, and key distinctions• Historical context and evolution of disinformation <p><i>Literature:</i></p> <p>Misinformation, disinformation, and malinformation: clarifying the definitions and examples in disinfodemic times K Santos-D’Amorim https://www.redalyc.org/journal/147/14768130011/14768130011.pdf</p> <p>The European Union approach to disinformation and misinformation: the case of the 2019 European Parliament elections S Hinds - Chapter 1 https://repository.gchumanrights.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/f5a6d37f-656d-4786-8a3f-93415d1bc9fc/content</p>

<p>25th of September</p>	<p>Mechanisms of Disinformation in the Digital Age</p> <p>Social media algorithms and echo chambers</p> <p>Bots, deepfakes, and AI-generated content</p> <p>Psychological and cognitive biases</p> <p>Literature :</p> <p>Microtargeting, automation, and forgery: disinformation in the age of artificial intelligence A Arsenault (Chapter 5)</p> <p>https://ruor.uottawa.ca/server/api/core/bitstreams/11d2b66c-cdab-45bc-b150-4fa82973e322/content</p> <p>Visual disinformation in a digital age: A literature synthesis and research agenda - T Weikmann, S Lecheler</p> <p>https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/14614448221141648</p> <p>The era of artificial intelligence deception: Unraveling the complexities of false realities and emerging threats of misinformation SM Williamson, V Prybutok</p> <p>https://www.mdpi.com/2078-2489/15/6/299</p>
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<p>2nd of October</p>	<p>Disinformation and EU Institutions</p> <p>EU governance and its role in countering disinformation</p> <p>Policy frameworks and legal tools</p> <p>Literature:</p> <p>The European Union approach to disinformation and misinformation: the case of the 2019 European Parliament elections S Hinds - Chapter 3</p> <p>https://repository.gchumanrights.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/f5a6d37f-656d-4786-8a3f-93415d1bc9fc/content</p>
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<p>9th of October</p>	<p>Foreign Influence and Hybrid Warfare</p> <p>Russia, China, and other external actors Cyber warfare and state-sponsored disinformation campaigns</p> <p><i>Literature:</i></p> <p>Russian hybrid warfare: A study of disinformation Authors: Splidsboel Hansen, Flemming https://www.econstor.eu/bitstream/10419/197644/1/896622703.pdf</p> <p>Theoretical understanding of State-Sponsored Disinformation P Iosifidis Chapter 2 https://library.oapen.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.12657/93091/9781040156520.pdf?sequence=1#page=36</p>
<p>16th of October</p>	<p>Internal EU Disinformation Networks</p> <p>Populism, far-right and far-left narratives Case studies: climate change denial</p> <p><i>Literature:</i></p> <p>Far Right--Ideology, Modus Operandi and Development Trends E Azani, L Koblenz-Stenzler, L Atiyas-Lvovsky Chapter 1 and 2 https://www.ict.org.il/images/The%20Far%20Right%20%E2%80%93%20Ideology.pdf</p> <p>Climate Politics in Populist Times: Climate Change Communication Strategies in Germany, Spain, and Austria M Gruber Chapter 2 https://library.oapen.org/viewer/web/viewer.html?file=/bitstream/handle/20.500.12657/93623/9781040166291.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y</p>

23 rd of October	National holiday
30 th of October	Autumn break
6 th of November	<p>Fact-Checking, Media Literacy, and Countermeasures</p> <p>Fact-Checking, Media Literacy, and Countermeasures</p> <p>Conspiracy theories, and media manipulation</p> <p>The role of NGOs, journalists, and EU initiatives</p> <p>Digital literacy programs and public awareness campaigns</p> <p>Challenges in debunking disinformation</p> <p>Literature:</p> <p>Digital media and misinformation: An outlook on multidisciplinary strategies against manipulation D Caled, MJ Silva https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s42001-021-00118-8</p> <p>Tackling disinformation with media literacy: analysis of trends in the European Union - C Sádaba, R Salaverría</p> <p>https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Ramon-Salaverria/publication/360240823_Tackling_disinformation_with_media_literacy_analysis_of_trends_in_the_European_Union/data/626aa385d99ac24cc4715ae6/1471-Texto-del-articulo-9529-3-10-20220427.pdf</p>
13 th of November	<p>Legal and Ethical Dilemmas in Combating Disinformation</p> <p>Free speech vs. regulation debates</p> <p>GDPR, Digital Services Act, and online platform accountability</p> <p>Ethical considerations in content moderation</p>

	<p>Literature:</p> <p>GDPR</p> <p>https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2016/679/oj/eng</p> <p>Legal and ethical implications of misinformation: A comparative study of regulatory approaches in the European Union and the United States - Oluwasegun Olakoyenikan</p> <p>https://www.masscomjournal.com/article/82/5-2-4-469.pdf</p>
20 th of November	<p>Future Challenges and Policy Recommendations</p> <p>AI and the next wave of disinformation</p> <p>Strengthening EU resilience and policy responses</p> <p>Student-led discussions on proposed solutions</p> <p>Literature:</p> <p>Microtargeting, automation, and forgery: disinformation in the age of artificial intelligence - A Arsenault (Chapter 6)</p> <p>https://ruor.uottawa.ca/server/api/core/bitstreams/11d2b66c-cdab-45bc-b150-4fa82973e322/content</p>
27 th of November	Presentation
4 th of December	Presentation
11 th of December	Grade submission and feedback

Requirements: The main evaluation during the semester will be based on the simulation of artificial intelligence in EU politics. The class will be divided in pairs, and each duo will be politicians from one Member State. Each component of the pair will follow a different ideology - left or right wing. Every week, by this simple programme coded by Python, the pairs will include their disinformation/debunking tools and techniques that they most find suitable in a Python simulation programme. The moves will estimate how many of their voting citizens tend to vote to left, central or right parties. In the end, each duo will hold a presentation on how planned their disinformation plan along the semester. The participants will be graded by this presentation and the participation in the simulation, which result will also depend on the final European Union Parliamentary election held in the end of the semester. The ideological parties that will receive the greatest number of votes in relation to their local party dominance will receive a higher grade in the end.

Course evaluation

Class participation on simulation and text discussions: 50%

In-class presentation: 50%