The Politics of Social Media and Misinformation Training Course

Professional Development Training Course Outline

Category	Political Science and International Relations	**Duration**	10 Days
Base Fee	$3,000 USD	**Delivery Mode**	Online / On-site Hybrid

Course Introduction

The ubiquity of social media has fundamentally reshaped our political landscape, making it a powerful tool for civic engagement but also a fertile ground for the spread of **misinformation** and **disinformation**. This course, **The Politics of Social Media and Misinformation**, is designed to equip participants with the critical skills and knowledge necessary to navigate this complex digital environment. We will explore the **algorithmic amplification** of false narratives, the role of **social bots** and **troll farms**, and the real-world impact of **fake news** on elections, public health, and social cohesion. By dissecting the **political economy of information**, this training provides a comprehensive framework for understanding how and why misinformation spreads, and empowers individuals to become proactive agents in building a more **resilient information ecosystem**.

The Politics of Social Media and Misinformation Training Course delves into the intricate relationship between technology, power, and truth. We will analyze how **political actors** and **bad faith actors** weaponize information to manipulate public opinion and sow division. The course emphasizes practical **fact-checking** techniques, **open-source intelligence (OSINT)**, and **digital forensics** to identify and debunk false claims. Through real-world **case studies** and interactive exercises, participants will learn to identify different types of **information disorders** and develop effective strategies for **counter-messaging** and **media literacy**. The ultimate goal is to foster a deeper understanding of the **online information landscape** and to cultivate a more discerning and responsible approach to consuming and sharing digital content.

Programme Curriculum

The Politics of Social Media and Misinformation Training Course

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Course Duration

10 days

Course Objectives

- **Deconstruct** the misinformation ecosystem.
- **Analyze** the political motivations behind disinformation campaigns.
- **Identify** and track the spread of fake news.
- **Employ** advanced fact-checking and **verification** techniques.
- **Recognize** cognitive biases and psychological vulnerabilities.
- **Understand** the role of **algorithmic bias** and platform governance.
- **Develop** effective **counter-narrative** and **pre-bunking** strategies.
- **Utilize** open-source intelligence (OSINT) tools for digital investigations.
- **Examine** the legal and ethical implications of misinformation.
- **Evaluate** the impact of propaganda on public opinion and elections.
- **Build** resilience to online manipulation and influence operations.
- **Create** evidence-based reports on information disorder trends.
- **Promote** responsible **digital citizenship** and **media literacy**.

Target Audience

- **Journalists** and **media professionals** covering politics and social issues.
- **Civil society leaders** and **activists** combating online manipulation.
- **Political campaign staff** and communication strategists.
- **Researchers** and academics studying digital media and public opinion.
- **Government officials** and policy analysts working on digital regulation.
- **Educators** and librarians teaching media literacy.
- **Fact-checkers** and investigators in non-profit organizations.
- **Communications** and **PR professionals** managing brand reputation online.

Course Content

Module 1: The Information Ecosystem

- Definitions: Misinformation, Disinformation, Malinformation.
- The psychology of belief and cognitive biases.
- The rise of filter bubbles and echo chambers.
- The role of social media platforms as information gatekeepers.
- **Case Study:** The 2016 U.S. Presidential Election and Russian influence campaigns.

Module 2: Fact-Checking Fundamentals

- The SIFT (Stop, Investigate the Source, Find Better Coverage, Trace Claims) method.
- Tools for image and video verification (e.g., reverse image search).
- Assessing the credibility of sources and claims.
- Understanding different types of content: satire, misleading, fabricated.
- **Case Study:** Debunking health-related hoaxes during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Module 3: Open-Source Intelligence (OSINT)

- Introduction to open-source tools for digital investigations.
- Geolocation techniques and verifying video footage.
- Tracing the origin of content and user profiles.
- Analyzing social media networks and bot activity.
- **Case Study:** Using OSINT to expose a coordinated network of fake accounts.

Module 4: Algorithmic Amplification & Manipulation

- How recommendation algorithms spread false content.
- The business models of social media platforms.
- Identifying social bots, troll farms, and inauthentic behavior.
- The impact of targeted advertising and micro-targeting.
- **Case Study:** The use of generative AI and deepfakes to create political misinformation.

Module 5: The Politics of Information Warfare

- State-sponsored disinformation and propaganda.
- Understanding narrative warfare and strategic communication.
- Examining foreign influence operations.
- Analyzing political polarization and online radicalization.
- **Case Study:** The weaponization of information during the war in Ukraine.

Module 6: Misinformation and Democracy

- The threat of fake news to electoral processes.
- Voter suppression and political misinformation.
- Analyzing the role of social media in political protests and civil unrest.
- The challenge of regulating online speech without censorship.
- **Case Study:** The impact of online misinformation on the January 6th Capitol riot.

Module 7: Misinformation and Public Health

- Understanding the infodemic and its public health consequences.

- The spread of anti-vaccine and pseudo-science narratives.
- Combating misinformation in crisis situations.
- The role of health organizations in fighting misinformation.
- **Case Study:** Analyzing the spread of misinformation during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Module 8: The Legal and Ethical Landscape

- Freedom of speech vs. the right to be protected from harm.
- Platform accountability and content moderation policies.
- The role of government regulation and legislation.
- Ethical considerations for journalists and researchers.
- **Case Study:** The legal battles over Section 230 and platform liability.

Module 9: Countering Misinformation

- Developing effective **counter-narrative** strategies.
- The science of **pre-bunking** vs. debunking.
- Building media literacy campaigns.
- Working with fact-checking organizations and civil society.
- **Case Study:** A community-led initiative to combat local misinformation.

Module 10: Building Digital Resilience

- Personal data privacy and digital security.
- Protecting yourself from targeted manipulation.
- Teaching critical thinking skills to different age groups.
- Fostering a culture of verification and healthy skepticism.
- **Case Study:** Designing a curriculum for high school students on media literacy.

Module 11: The Future of Misinformation

- The rise of generative AI and synthetic media.
- The next generation of online influence tools.
- The threat of deepfakes and audio fakes.
- Anticipating future trends in information disorder.
- **Case Study:** The political implications of a future where AI-generated content is indistinguishable from reality.

Module 12: Reporting and Communicating Misinformation

- Best practices for reporting on misinformation ethically.
- Avoiding the amplification of false claims.
- Visualizing data and trends in information disorder.
- Communicating complex topics to a broad audience.
- **Case Study:** A journalistic investigation into a specific disinformation network.

Module 13: Global Perspectives on Misinformation

- Comparative analysis of misinformation in different political systems.
- The role of misinformation in conflicts and humanitarian crises.
- International cooperation in combating online threats.
- The global implications of platform policies.

- **Case Study:** The use of social media to spread misinformation during a geopolitical conflict.

Module 14: Practical Toolkit & Simulations

- Hands-on workshop with verification tools.
- Simulated digital forensics exercise.
- Developing a strategic communication plan to counter a false narrative.
- Role-playing scenarios of online manipulation.
- **Case Study:** A simulated crisis scenario requiring rapid fact-checking.

Module 15: Capstone Project

- Participants choose a real-world case study to analyze.
- Conducting a full digital investigation from start to finish.
- Creating a comprehensive report on their findings.
- Presenting their project and recommendations to the group.
- **Case Study:** Independent research and analysis of a current online misinformation trend.

Register as a group from 3 participants for a Discount

Send us an email: info@fineskilltrainingcenter.org or call *+254769199797*

Certification

Upon successful completion of this training, participants will be issued with a globally- recognized certificate.

Tailor-Made Course

We also offer tailor-made courses based on your needs.

Key Notes

a. The participant must be conversant with English.

b. Upon completion of training the participant will be issued with an Authorized Training Certificate

c. Course duration is flexible and the contents can be modified to fit any number of days.

d. The course fee includes facilitation training materials, 2 coffee breaks, buffet lunch and A Certificate upon successful completion of Training.

e. One-year post-training support Consultation and Coaching provided after the course.

f. Payment should be done at least a week before commence of the training, to Fineskill Training Center account, as indicated in the invoice so as to enable us prepare better for you.

Upcoming Scheduled Sessions

Start Date	End Date	Location	Price

23 Nov 2026	04 Dec 2026	Online	$2,000
23 Nov 2026	04 Dec 2026	Physical	$3,000
23 Nov 2026	04 Dec 2026	Physical	$6,000
23 Nov 2026	04 Dec 2026	Physical	$6,000
23 Nov 2026	04 Dec 2026	Physical	$12,000
23 Nov 2026	04 Dec 2026	Physical	$9,000
23 Nov 2026	04 Dec 2026	Physical	$12,000
23 Nov 2026	04 Dec 2026	Physical	$12,000

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