

Overview:

Dr. Susan Shelangoskie, an English professor, provides a historical lens for how and why fake news stories might be accepted by the general public in her lecture, "History of Fake News," at Lourdes University.

Summary:

In this excerpt, "News and the Growth of Technology," Dr. Shelangoskie uses the first well-known fake news story to highlight the changes in news media and historic and contemporary regard for truth. The news article claims there is real evidence to a strange race of people living on the moon. Shelangoskie asserts that hoaxes such as her example proliferate due to speed of technologies of the day, civil and ideological antagonisms and erosion of the credibility of the press. She also explains the ways in which accelerated scientific and social changes during this time period caused the entrenched status quo to push back against empiricism and new developments.

ODE 9-12 STANDARD 1: *English Language Arts; Strand, Reading Standards for Informational Text, Grades 9-12; Topic 1, Key Ideas and Details; Topic 2, Craft and Structure*

ODE 9-12 STANDARD 2: *English Language Arts; Strand, Standards for Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects, Grades 9-12; Focus, History/Social Studies; Topic 1, Key Ideas and Details; Topic 2, Craft and Structure*

Discussion Questions:

1. What are the benefits for the people who are creating fake news?
2. What do you think can be done to combat fake news? Why do you think this is important in civil society?
3. Can cultural stereotypes shape fake news? List specific ways.
4. What steps can social media outlets take to prevent the dissemination of fake news?

Activity:

1. Instruct students to review 5 ways of spotting fake news: <https://wgte.pbslearningmedia.org/resource/nmlit17-ela-idfakenews/identifying-fake-news/#.WxQGtUgvzb0>
2. Then, ask student to read the following article and to evaluate it: <https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/6078018/https-www-thesun-co-uk-tech-4543046-end-of-the-world-rapture-doomsday-conspiracy-theories/>
3. Lead a discussion about the students' findings.

Resources:

How to spot fake news in media: <https://www.factcheck.org/2016/11/how-to-spot-fake-news/>

