



# COMILLAS

UNIVERSIDAD PONTIFICIA

ICAI

ICADE

CIHS

GUÍA DOCENTE

2025 - 2026

## FICHA TÉCNICA DE LA ASIGNATURA

### Datos de la asignatura

Nombre completo	Campaigns of Misinformation and Public Opinion. Case Study
Código	E000013488
Impartido en	Master in International Security Management [Primer Curso]
Nivel	Master
Cuatrimestre	Semestral
Créditos	5,0 ECTS
Carácter	Optativa
Departamento / Área	Departamento de Relaciones Internacionales
Responsable	Ileana Daniela Serban
Descriptor	Cyber-challenges and narrative information management track

### Datos del profesorado

## DATOS ESPECÍFICOS DE LA ASIGNATURA

### Contextualización de la asignatura

#### Aportación al perfil profesional de la titulación

Cyber-challenges and narrative information management track

### Competencias - Objetivos

#### Competencias

SC10 Ability to manage a disinformation campaign.

SC11 Ability to develop and implement communication strategies at different levels.

#### Resultados de Aprendizaje

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

1. Analyse the mechanisms through which misinformation spreads and influences public opinion, including digital and traditional platforms.
2. Assess the role of social and psychological factors, such as polarisation and attention deficit, or cognitive biases and emotional appeals, in shaping audience susceptibility to misinformation.
3. Understand the role played by new technologies and algorithmic content distribution platforms, and critically anticipate the impact of generative artificial intelligence in opinion-making and the information ecosystem.
4. Critically evaluate real-world case studies of misinformation campaigns in political, corporate, and social contexts, identifying patterns and strategies.
5. Investigate the impact of misinformation on public trust, policy, and societal behaviour.
6. Propose strategies for identifying and mitigating the effects of misinformation on public opinion, considering both technological



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tools and policy interventions.

7. Develop a nuanced understanding of the ethical and legal challenges involved in countering misinformation campaigns.

## BLOQUES TEMÁTICOS Y CONTENIDOS

### Contenidos – Bloques Temáticos

#### Block 1: Introduction and concepts

##### **Topic 1: *Introduction to Campaigns of Misinformation and Public Opinion: post-truth and democratic trust in a polarised world***

###### **Objectives:**

- Understand the relationship between misinformation campaigns, the information ecosystem and the shaping of public opinion.
- Explore different types of misinformation campaigns, their context and intended impacts.

###### **Content:**

- Turbulent global dynamics in a polarized world
- Definitions -from hybrid threats to fake news- and types of misinformation: disinformation, malinformation, and misinformation.
- Theories of public opinion and how they intersect with misinformation campaigns.
- Overview of the objectives and impact of misinformation campaigns on electoral and political processes, social dynamics and unrest, and corporate reputation.

###### **Activity:**

- Case study analysis: Examine a political misinformation campaign

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##### **Topic 2: *The Psychological and Social Context aggravating the Impact of Misinformation Campaigns***

###### **Objectives:**

- Analyse the political, social and psychological mechanisms that make misinformation campaigns effective.
- Examine the social dynamics of misinformation spread.

###### **Content:**

- The political context for lies-spreading in a polarised world.
- Cognitive biases and emotions in the consumption of misinformation.
- An anthropological perspective on lying
- The role of social networks in amplifying misinformation.



- Public opinion dynamics: the attention crisis and how misinformation shifts perceptions and behaviours.

**Activity:**

- Students' presentation and group discussion: Analyse the psychological impact of a fake news story in a specific campaign.
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**Topic 3: Media and Technology's Role in Misinformation Campaigns**

**Objectives:**

- Understand the role of media and digital technology in the spread of misinformation.
- Identify the ways technology enables misinformation to target specific audiences.

**Content:**

- The evolution of media's role: from the traditional press to digital platforms.
- The rise of algorithmic manipulation and echo chambers.
- From attention economics to "surveillance capitalism".
- Case studies of media and tech platforms: the long algorithmic march from the Blue Book to X and (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube).

**Activity:**

Case study analysis: Dissect a viral misinformation campaign on social media.

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**Topic 4: The Future of Misinformation and Public Trust in a world flooded with AI-generated content**

**Objectives:**

- Predict the future trends in misinformation and its impact on public opinion.
- Explore innovative solutions to combat misinformation in the future.

**Content:**

- The evolving nature of misinformation in the AI age.
- From generative AI to Artificial General Intelligence: innovation or marketing?
- Technological advancements in misinformation and combating it: cyberthreats, deepfakes...
- The role of education and media literacy in mitigating misinformation.

**Activity:**

Group brainstorming: Propose a framework to label AI-generated content to build-up a future strategy for combating deepfakes and AI-generated false stories and images.

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**Block 2: Strategies and response tools**



## **Topic 5: Strategic Responses to Misinformation Campaigns: an Overview**

### **Objectives:**

- Evaluate strategies used by states, corporations, and social platforms to counter misinformation.
- Assess the effectiveness of fact-checking and social media regulation.

### **Content:**

- Detection techniques for misinformation (AI, crowdsourcing, fact-checking).
- Strategies for containment and counter-narratives.
- Policy approaches: government interventions vs. platform self-regulation.

### **Activity:**

- Oxford-style debate: The Regulatory Challenge with content platforms and AI – PROS / CONS

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## **Topic 6: Misinformation and Its Influence on Public Opinion: Interfering in Political Campaigns**

### **Objectives:**

- Explore how misinformation campaigns are designed to influence public opinion during elections.
- Analyse case studies of misinformation influencing electoral outcomes.

### **Content:**

- Techniques used in political misinformation campaigns.
- Misinformation's effect on voting behaviour and public trust.
- Case studies: 2016 US Election, Brexit, and other political campaigns.

### **Activity:**

Case study analysis: Examine the role of fake news in the Brexit referendum and its effects on public opinion.

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## **Topic 7: Managing Misinformation Threats and Risks: A Governmental Perspective**

### **Objectives:**

- Understand the risk analysis and threat levels from a governmental perspective
- Learn how organisations and governments can manage reputational risk in the digital age.

### **Content:**

- Conceptualising governmental risk analysis in the context of misinformation.
- Case studies of governments handling disinformation threats and reputational crises.
- Communication strategies for protecting reputation during a misinformation attack.



**Activity:**

- Role-playing exercise: Simulate a crisis response to a misinformation campaign targeting the Spanish government. TBD

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**Topic 8: Crisis and Corporate Reputation Management for Viral Misinformation Campaigns**

**Objectives:**

- Understand the impact of fake-news on corporate reputation and the connection between misinformation campaigns and reputational damage.
- Develop crisis management strategies to handle the rapid spread of viral misinformation.
- Learn how to manage internal and external communication in the face of misinformation.

**Content:**

- Crisis communication strategies specific to misinformation scenarios.
- Frameworks for managing corporate reputational crises in a digital world.
- Stakeholder engagement: addressing public, media, and internal audiences.

**Activity:**

Group activity: Develop a crisis management plan for a company dealing with viral misinformation

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**Block 3: Ethical and methodological aspects**

**Topic 9: Evaluating the Effectiveness of Misinformation Campaigns**

**Objectives:**

- Learn how to assess the success and impact of misinformation campaigns.
- Identify key metrics for measuring the spread and effectiveness of misinformation.

**Content:**

- Methods for tracking misinformation (social listening, media monitoring).
- Case study analysis: Success and failure metrics in real-world campaigns.
- Long-term effects of misinformation on public opinion and policy.

**Activity:**

- Activity: Create a report evaluating the effectiveness of a real-world misinformation campaign.

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**Topic 10: Legal and Ethical Considerations in Misinformation Campaigns**

**Objectives:**



- Examine the ethical and legal implications of misinformation campaigns.
- Understand the regulatory landscape and its impact on misinformation control.

**Content:**

- Ethical challenges: freedom of speech vs. misinformation prevention.
- Legal frameworks: GDPR, CCPA, and international regulations.
- The role of international bodies in regulating misinformation.

**Activity:**

- Debate: Discuss ethical dilemmas faced by governments and platforms when tackling misinformation.

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**Block 4: Final Projects and Essays**

**Objectives:**

- Apply course knowledge to analyse a real-world misinformation campaign.
- Develop a comprehensive strategy for addressing misinformation in a public opinion context.

**Content:**

- Guidelines for the final project: Case study analysis and strategy development.
- Review of key concepts covered in the course.

**Activity:**

- Final project work session: Students work on their projects with feedback from peers and instructors.
- Final presentations: Students present their case studies and solutions for addressing misinformation campaigns.

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**Final week: Course Reflection and Future Trends**

**Objectives:**

- Reflect on the course's key lessons and how to apply them in professional contexts.
- Discuss future challenges and opportunities in misinformation management.

**Content:**

- Summary of course learnings and key takeaways.
- Discussion on the future of misinformation campaigns and public opinion.

**Activity:**

- Reflection essay: Write a reflection on how the course has shaped your understanding of misinformation and public opinion.



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## Aspectos metodológicos generales de la asignatura

**Lectures and Readings:** Core concepts and frameworks will be introduced during the lectures, while preparatory readings and materials will be shared in advance.

**Case Study Analysis:** Students apply theoretical knowledge to real-world case studies, fostering critical thinking.

**Group Discussions:** In-class debates on emerging threats, international policies, and ethical concerns.

**Simulation Exercises:** Hands-on simulations.

## EVALUACIÓN Y CRITERIOS DE CALIFICACIÓN

Evaluation	(%)
Final project	50%
Participation	20%
In-class exercises	30%

## Calificaciones

*To be eligible to sit the ordinary exam session, students must not have unjustifiably missed more than one third of the classes. Failure to meet this requirement may result in the loss of both the ordinary and extraordinary exam sessions (Art. 93.1 of the General Regulations).*

*Committing a serious academic offense—such as plagiarism of previously published materials, cheating during an exam or other assessed activity, or failing to respect basic rules of conduct—may lead to disciplinary proceedings and the loss of two exam sessions.*

*The use of AI to generate entire assignments or substantial parts thereof, without citing the source or tool used, or when not explicitly allowed in the assignment instructions, will be considered plagiarism and regulated in accordance with the University's General Regulations.*

## BIBLIOGRAFÍA Y RECURSOS

### Bibliografía Básica

Specific to each case study.