

What is Truth?

Breakout Session and Reflection Description

Session 1 • 10:15 – 11:15am

Breakout sessions are 60 minutes in length with exceptions noted in the description.

1984 in 2018

Presenter: Pamela J Lucas

The discussion will focus on themes found in George Orwell's 1984 including concepts like: Ministry of Truth (Mini-True, Big brother is watching you, Ignorance is Strength, Freedom is Slavery, War is Peace, etc.). Brief videos will be shown to help facilitate the discussion. Participants will come away with a better understanding of truth, propaganda, and the role they may have played in the last presidential election.

A Cross Culture Discussion of What Is the Truth and Nothing But the Truth

Presenters: Rachel Haos & International students

In this session, international student panelists will lead an interactive discussion on what it means to be truthful in their cultural contexts. Lighthearted and serious topics on truth will be discussed. Participants will gain a better understanding of cultural practices and nuances amongst different types of relationships.

Communicating Truthfully Through Movement

Presenters: Anna Haney and students

In order for a performance to authentically reach and communicate with an audience, the performer and movement must convey truth. Through improvisation and contemporary dance we will explore the question: How does one communicate truthfully through movement? No previous movement experience necessary. Please come dressed to move. No street shoes allowed on the dance floor. Socks, bare feet, or dance shoes are allowed.

Gender, Genocide, and the Truths We Tell (or don't) Ourselves

Presenter: Amy Shapiro

This session will explore how gender and genocide are related to one another and related to the ways in which we explain genocide to ourselves. Participants will leave this session with a better awareness of genocide and its connections to our own lives.

Meaning and Truth in Poetry and Chemistry

Presenters: Angela Sorby and Tracy Thompson

In this interactive presentation we will explore what ways interpreting poetry and using models in understanding the physical are alike and different, in addition to how the frame into which we put our data impacts meaning. Participants will observe and engage in the transferable nature of abilities across disciplinary settings.

Multi- Generational Appreciation: Moving from Perception to Reality

Presenter: Dionna Gavin, '17, Froedtert & Medical College of Wisconsin

Perceptions are a normal part of daily life. However, do our perceptions always equate to reality? When it comes to generational groups, the assumptions we make often hinder our ability to effectively work as a team. We will explore how building upon our "truth" can lead to a greater appreciation of the various generations.

Science, God, and Rationality

Presenter: Jonathon Hanes, PhD, UW-Milwaukee

A common goal people share is to determine truth and separate fact from fiction. Science has a key role to play in this goal. Does Christian teaching support or hinder the progress of science? A rarely addressed question is where the rationality of science comes from. This presentation will explore the inner workings of scientific rationality.

Shifting Truths of the Slave Trade

Presenters: John C. Savagian & students

This is a student/faculty led discussion on how historians use evidence to construct "truth." The principle source will be the International Slave Trade Database, an on-line searchable records source of over 33,000 slave trade voyages. Participants will be introduced to the historical framework of America as a "slave society" and become engaged in a dialogue about memory, legend, history, and the shaping of American truth regarding race, racism, slavery, across time and space.

The Framework of YES! Expectations for Success!

Presenter: Michael Krill, Oconomowoc High School

What is the truth regarding success? How do you define success? What factors help determine if this defined success is reachable? Often goal setting, problem solving, collaboration, and expected outcomes are based on preconceived knowledge and standardized outcomes. What if we could truly tap into what motivates us to be successful and alter our behaviors, attitudes, and motivation regarding success? Could we redefine success and our criteria for determining what success truly is? The truth is we are all more capable than what we realize. Yet our approach to defining success limits our potential. The *Framework of Yes!* Harnesses the power of success by encouraging a shift in thinking about what mindset we work with. Learn the truth in a workshop model by listening, watching and doing!

The Truth is Not Always What it Seems: Exploring our unconscious biases

Presenter: Jennifer Evertsen

What we think is true may not actually be fact. This session will explore ways in which our brain and past experiences control what we believe to be true. We will explore ways to recognize, identify, and begin to overcome our unconscious biases.

Truth about Diversity

Presenters: Jennifer Jarvey Balisteri, '15, and Jessica Langill, '15

(Session time: 10:15 – 10:45am)

In this session we will evaluate how we perceive and define diversity within the United States. This will include looking beyond race and explore how diverse characteristics influence our self-esteem and success. Additionally, we will examine how emotional intelligence and communication can foster change in times of conflict.

Truth and Evidence Have a Complicated Relationship

Presenter: Paul Smith

(Session time: 10:15 – 11:00am)

We tend to talk about disputes over matters of fact as though they're simple: if you have evidence, you're right, and if you don't, you're wrong. But the relationship between evidence and truth is far more complicated than that suggests. This session will reveal a set of "levels of engagement" to illustrate the range of ways that presentations of evidence can fall short of honestly engaging an issue to establish the truth.

Truth in Mental Health Assessment and Diagnosing

Presenters: Shayla Moore, Rachel Reinders, PhD, Margaret Sergon, Christina Williams, and Deshanda Williams

This session will explore the history of diagnosis, climate surrounding stigma, and current research surrounding diagnostic methods. Cultural considerations will be discussed, such as inaccurate diagnosing in some populations. How truth is perceived and treated in the field will be raised. Participants will gain insight into mental health diagnosis processes and how this interacts with stigma and culture.

Uncovering the “Truth” of Early Modern Women’s Lives

Presenters: Jodi Eastberg and students

Jane De Hart writes in *Women's America: Refocusing the Past* that “One of the most effective ways in which dominant groups maintain their power is by depriving the people they dominate of the knowledge of their own history.” But, what is the historian to do when sources distort or do not offer clear record of women's lives. This panel will look at the work of contemporary historians in uncovering the lives of diverse women in the past.

[Session 2 • 11:30am - 12:30pm](#)

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“What is Artistic Truth?” Putting Director Baz Luhrmann and his film *The Great Gatsby* on Trial

Presenters: Tavia Hunt, Victoria Koenig, Jon Little, Gabrielle Lynn, Sebastian Melmoth and Ana Valle

(Session time: 11:30am – 12:15pm)

The presentation will re-enact our class's "trial" of Luhrmann and hear arguments for and against Luhrmann with film clips to support each side. Attendees of this session will have the chance to cast their verdict [guilty or not guilty] after the closing arguments and give their reasons why. This mock-trial format will bring up fascinating issues relating to artistic improv, historical and biographical accuracy, and the freedoms vs. the responsibilities of the artist relating to historical and artistic truth.

A Conversation about Absolute Truths and How Much We Can or Can’t Know

Presenters: Stephen Sharkey and Joyce Tang Boyland

This session consists of an informal interactive conversation from different standpoints about the possibility of absolute truth. Attendees will be invited to participate and will encounter a variety of never-considered perspectives about absolute truth whilst exploring what cultural realism and moral realism means to them.

Choreographing Dance Truthfully

Presenter: Anna Haney

(Session time: 11:30am – 12:15pm)

This session will present the process and choreography Anna Haney has been working on this past year that strives to truthfully communicate a work's intent to the audience. This was approached through the investigation of these questions: How do you incorporate dancer input, especially in relation to partnering, that is authentic, when the dancers have limited experience without it appearing contrived? How can you construct material that contains underlying narrative and instruct dancers in a manner that reads genuine to an audience? How do you combine multiple themes and ideas within a work while retaining the characteristics that allow for it to be truthful? How can you retain the integrity of the choreographic intent while integrating skill and components necessary for competition?

Detecting the Truth: How do we assess if someone is telling the truth in the courtroom setting

Presenter: Mikelene Ray

(Session time: 11:30am – 12:15pm)

This presentation will discuss the issues around determining if an individual is being truthful in a courtroom setting. How do we measure if an individual is being honest? How has honesty been measured in the courtroom? What are the problems with the technology used in the courtroom? Are there reliable ways to determine if someone is telling the truth? What are some of the concerns? Participants will gain an appreciation of: how lie detectors have been used in courtrooms and the current methods to determine if individuals are truthful.

FACE – to – FACE

Presenters: Adekola Adedapo, Sue Mente and students

This is an interactive listening session with facilitation by staff and students that allows for open and honest conversations around race (questions are drawn and asked of People of Color and Caucasians alternately) in a safe space where the speaker is not interrupted and people are asked to feed back what they hear the speaker say. There are conversation norms posted and agreed upon by the group before we begin. The participants sit in two rows of seats that are facing each other - thus Face-to-Face.

Fact of Fiction in Photos: The Camera Lies like a Dog

Presenter: Amy Karsten

You know that images can be manipulated a thousand different ways. But this only happens in selfies, fashion, and advertising, right? Not so. There's a long history of news images that were manipulated to influence how people see world events. We'll look at some of those, discuss ethical codes, and then we'll have some hands-on time to practice photo editing.

Gaining Freedom from Suffering: Exploring the Four Noble Truths

Presenter: Jean Groshek

(Session time 11:30am – 12:00pm)

According to Buddhist philosophy, we experience additional, unnecessary suffering when we do not look clearly at the circumstances of our lives. By examining the Four Noble Truths of Buddhism, participants in this workshop session will look at possibilities for attaining greater freedom from struggling with our daily challenges, big and small.

How Do You Forgive a Liar?

Presenter: Pamela Lucas

This workshop will focus on forgiveness as an act that benefits the forgiver and the forgiven. Lying is a violation of trust. It must be forgiven in order to move ahead in one's life. In this session participants will share experiences of receiving and giving forgiveness. They will also be given the opportunity to write poems related to forgiveness or create a collage that illustrates forgiveness.

How Our World is influenced by the Truth

Presenter: Alesia Tweedie

(Session time: 11:30am – 12:00pm)

This session will discuss how the truth has influenced socialization, human behavior and what research is helping us to discover how we determine what truth is. The idea of why we seek to define truth will also be addressed. The audience will gain awareness to suspicions, biases and defense mechanisms that influence socialization and behavior.

How to Use the Truth

Presenter: Russell Brooker

(Session time: 11:30am – 12:15pm)

This presentation will explore the environments in which individuals should, or should not, tell the truth. It covers the results from research of students who played several simulation games and wrote about their most successful strategies. Sometimes telling the truth is rational; sometimes it is not. People attending this session will develop a better understanding of how the setting of a person influences whether it is rational to tell the truth or not.

Students from Hispanic Traditions Speak their Truths

Presenters: Susana Perez, Amy Shapiro and students

A panel of students from various Hispanic traditions (potentially some alumni as well) will share their experiences of their traditions, their experiences as minority students at the college, and will engage in a discussion of how the college can provide better support and how non-Hispanic students might be better educated about issues related to students of Hispanic traditions.

History, Truth and Memory

Presenter: Anne C. Bailey, PhD, SUNY Binghamton (State University of New York)

What is historical memory and why does it matter? This session proposes an interdisciplinary and comparative approach to the question of historical memory. Cases studies include content in early US History (The Transatlantic Slave Trade and Slavery) and the Holocaust. What do we learn about human nature from these case studies in history? And why does memory matter? Finally, how does memory of these difficult periods in history pertain to contemporary times?

Think like a Fact-checker: Recognizing fake news

Presenters: Larry Duerr and Cat Jones

(Session time: 11:30am – 12:15pm)

Creators of fake news rely on an individual's strong reaction to a controversial or surprising story to spread fabricated news stories on the Internet. This session will give participants a strategy to become better fact checkers based on Mike Caulfield's "Four Moves and a Habit" approach.

What is Truth from Religious Studies Perspective?

Presenters: Steven Dunn, Dan Leister and Trish Lewis

Faculty from Alverno's Religious Studies Department will explore the nature of religious truth through story, beliefs and symbolism. Participants will be invited to discuss religious truth as distinct from scientific or literal truth. An understanding of the significance and relevance of religion in contemporary society will be established.

The Truth about Hunger in Milwaukee

Presenter: Lynda Sommers

Did you know local meal programs in Milwaukee serve nearly 60,000 meals each month and that Milwaukee's child poverty rate is 43% nearly double the national average? Hunger Task Force serves approximately 35,000 people each month at local Milwaukee food pantries. Half of those they serve are children. Participants will learn what's being done in Milwaukee to combat hunger and make a ceramic bowl for the Empty Bowls Project.

Reflection Session • 12:30pm - 1:15pm

Reflection, Reaction, Response: What is our Understanding of Truth?

Moderators: Center for Academic Excellence and the Doherty Scholars

(Please feel free to bring your lunch! Cookies will be provided.)

In this culminating session open to all conference attendees, we will engage in thoughtful dialogue around the emerging themes from the day's sessions. Participants will share and discuss key learnings, and will identify how these learnings can be translated into meaningful action.