In addition to watching videos and reading online material and news stories, assignments for this course will include the following books:

Daniel Kahneman, *Thinking, Fast and Slow* (NY: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2013). After Kahneman won the Nobel Prize for his work on how people make decisions, he published a summary of his decades of research in *Thinking, Fast and Slow*. His work is based on the premise that human thinking is fundamentally vulnerable to error regardless of an individual's intelligence or education.

Hugo Mercier, *Not Born Yesterday: The Science of Who We Trust and What We Believe* (NJ: Princeton University Press, 2020). Even a Nobel Prize doesn't mean that findings are fixed in stone. In *Not Born Yesterday*, Mercier takes issue with the way psychologists such as Kahneman present the notion of human gullibility. Presumably, other scholars will take issue with Mercier. We'll evaluate both books not to find the one right answer to every question, but to examine the factors underlying the way people decide, e.g., which candidate to support. That, in turn, will inform our understanding of the way politicians and others frame arguments in an effort to persuade.

George Orwell, *1984* (any edition). This iconic novel of post-truth dystopia is irreplaceable. Written in 1948 (when there were no computers, phones had live operators and party lines, and milk was delivered in horse-drawn carts), *1984* addresses such currently topical issues as electronic surveillance and the manipulation of history.

Stuart Ritchie, *Science Fictions: How Fraud, Bias, Negligence, and Hype Undermine the Search for Truth* (NY: Metropolitan Books/Holt, 2020). Even without the pandemic, it's likely that the 2020 election season would have included a great deal of debate about what science means and how (or whether) it should influence public policy. Global warming and mandatory school vaccinations are obvious examples. WITH the pandemic, interpretations of science are going to play an even larger role. Although *Science Fictions*’ exposure of flaws in the way science is currently practiced might appear at first to downplay the importance of scientific studies, its purpose is to produce an informed public capable of recognizing -- and demanding -- trustworthy scientific results.