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Navigating Research Misappropriation and Mischaracterization: Facilitating a Workshop on Strategies

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Navigating Research Misappropriation and Mischaracterization:

Facilitating a Workshop on Strategies

Winn W. Wasson

Social Science Librarian

Critical Thinking Bootcamp 2021 Lightning Talk

August 12, 2021



Research and Researchers Under Threat

The Roots of Misunderstanding Research

- Deliberately mischaracterizing research
 - Scale of unauthorized immigration
 - <https://www.npr.org/2021/02/22/970074431/illegal-border-crossings-rise-as-some-people-try-multiple-times>
 - Inflation numbers
 - <https://slate.com/business/2021/04/inflation-is-about-to-look-freaky.html>
- Misappropriating research
 - Detailed 2020 Census data and race and ethnicity
 - <https://www.washingtonpost.com/dc-md-va/2021/08/10/census-race-population-changes-redistricting/>
- Hostility toward researchers
 - Indian Historian Romila Thapar and Hindu Nationalists in India
 - https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/asia_pacific/india-romila-thapar-dissent/2021/01/02/1a79ca54-4070-11eb-b58b-1623f6267960_story.html
 - Medieval Historian Dorothy Kim and the Alt-Right in the United States
 - <https://www.insidehighered.com/views/2018/08/30/scholar-describes-being-conditionally-accepted-medieval-studies-opinion>

A Workshop for Faculty and Graduate Students

The Public and Your Publications: Strategies for Handling the Misappropriation or Misrepresentation of Your Research

Interactive Lead-In

- Participants share common misconceptions related to their field of research
- Participants watch video of Congressional testimony by Dr. Anthony Fauci and identify and evaluate his strategies

Discussion of Strategies

- Thinking of the undergraduate classroom as a trial run
- Keeping current with research in one's field of research
- Keeping current with what is being said about one's field of research
- Identifying any grains of truth in a misunderstanding or mischaracterization of research
- Recognizing and articulating the social/political context behind a misunderstanding, mischaracterization, or misappropriation of research
- Showing the original source, including what the source has said that might dovetail with the worldview of the skeptic
- Situating the larger debate in a historical or comparative cultural context
- Reach out to your supervisor and campus administration if you are being harassed

Takeaways and Future Directions

- I came into the workshop cognizant of the limitations of my experience
 - These recommended strategies and the ways in which they are deployed are contextual based on the characteristics of the researcher and of their audience
 - In the future, I would like to incorporate other facilitators who can speak to this
- Plan is to teach workshops in-person in Fall 2021 and Spring 2022

Thank You.

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