

08-15 Classroom Summary: Political Science and Media Literacy

Summary of Classroom Activities and Lectures

Media Literacy and Digital Skills

Another class focused on critical thinking, media literacy, and proficiency with digital tools, though the session was marked by technical difficulties and classroom disruptions.

Classroom Environment and Disruptions

The class was interrupted multiple times by a malfunctioning lockdown alarm system, forcing students and the teacher to follow emergency procedures repeatedly. The administration eventually instructed the school to disregard further alarms. The teacher adapted by using lamps instead of overhead lights in anticipation of a future lighting mandate.

Core Lesson: Media Literacy via a Case Study

The central lesson taught source verification through a daily exercise involving a deliberately mislabeled image.

- **The Premise:** Students were shown a photo labeled "The Beatles' first concert in the United States."
- **The Investigation:** The instructor modeled a verification process:
 1. **Research:** Use a tool like ChatGPT to find details of the actual event (Washington Coliseum, Feb. 11, 1964).
 2. **Compare:** Note discrepancies between the provided image and authentic photos.
 3. **Reverse Image Search:** Upload the image to find its true origin.
- 2. **The Truth:** The image was a photoshopped version of a famous Pulitzer Prize-winning photo of Jack Ruby shooting Lee Harvey Oswald on November 23, 1963. The photo was altered to add a microphone, replace a gun with a guitar, and insert a keyboard and a "Dead Kennedys" logo.

3. **Pedagogical Goal:** The teacher's stated objective was for students to learn to be suspicious of information and verify its authenticity, summarizing the mandate as: "If I tell you something, your job is to figure out if I'm telling you the truth or if I'm lying."

Project: Multi-Part Diagram Assignment

Students began a major project using the `diagrams.net` application to create a series of four diagrams. The project is designed to build skills in information organization, digital tool use, and following instructions.

- **Project Components:**

1. **Favorite Things:** A categorized list of 18 favorite things (e.g., hobbies, companies).
 2. **Class Schedule:** A visual representation of the student's schedule, including block days.
 3. **Tech Lab Seating Chart:** A spatial map of the classroom layout.
 4. **Favorite Company Analysis:** A research-based diagram including the company's logo, CEO, 2024 sales, and founding year.
2. **Workflow:** The project is scaffolded, requiring students to first create and submit a graded 18-point pencil sketch of their "Favorite Things" diagram before beginning the digital version. The instructor provided one-on-one support and emphasized watching a tutorial video to learn efficient techniques in the software.

Technical Issues and Other Assignments

- **Technology Quiz:** A quiz where all answers were available in a linked slideshow, testing students' ability to follow directions.
- **Administrative Tasks:** Students were reminded to share their "CompTech" folder for grading and to turn in signed syllabi.

Upcoming Deadlines and Assignments

- **Syllabus Management:**
 - Provide the class syllabus to any student who needs one (the copy must be returned).
 - Students with a signed syllabus should place it in the instructor's box to receive points.
- **Media Literacy & Tech Assignments:**
 - Finish the "integrity" and "integrity for presidents" assignments.
 - Complete the new daily exercise on "Armed Forces Day," approaching it with suspicion.
 - Take the Technology Quiz and get 100% by using the provided answer slideshow.

- Share the "CompTech" folder with the teacher to receive grades.
- **Diagram Project (Tentatively due Wednesday):**
 - Complete and submit the "favorite things" pencil sketch if not already done.
 - Review the [diagrams.net](#) tutorial on the class website.
 - Complete all four digital diagrams: "Favorite Things," "Class Schedule," "Tech Lab Seating Chart," and "Favorite Company Analysis."
 - Save all work to the appropriate Google Drive folder.
- **Upcoming Schedule:**
 - Monday's class will be a 45-minute period.
 - An assembly is scheduled for Tuesday.