



Community Spotlight

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Calling Bull: Data Reasoning in a Digital World

By Carl Bergstrom, Jevin West



Module Description:

This week's resource is the website callingbull.org (main version: callingbullshit.org) which accompanies a course entitled "Calling Bull" at the University of Washington in Seattle. The class was created by two faculty members, Carl Bergstrom and Jevin West, to teach critical thinking, analytical skills, and how to construct an argument. The website includes the course syllabus, readings, case studies, and other tools. Here is a brief description of the course, taken directly from the website:

"What do we mean, exactly, by bull and calling bull? As a first approximation:

Bull involves language, statistical figures, data graphics, and other forms of presentation intended to persuade by impressing and overwhelming a reader or listener, with a blatant disregard for truth and logical coherence.

Calling bull is a performative utterance, a speech act in which one publicly repudiates something objectionable. The scope of targets is broader than bull alone. You can call bull on bull, but you can also call bull on lies, treachery, trickery, or injustice.

In this course we will teach you how to spot the former and effectively perform the latter...."

Teaching Setting:

This course was originally designed as a one credit undergraduate course at the University of Washington. Students met with the instructors once a week in a traditional lecture hall setting. The authors intend to expand the course to a three credit class.

In general, the materials are suitable for introductory undergraduate courses and may be adapted for high school courses as well.

Citation:

Bergstrom, C., West, J. (2017). [Calling Bull: Data Reasoning in a Digital World](https://callingbull.org). Last accessed on 30 May 2019.

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Related Materials and Opportunities:

Looking to insert some fresh lessons on critical thinking into your fall courses? In the spirit of Open Educational Resources (OER), the authors of Calling Bull are happy for others to use and/or adapt their course materials. However, they ask that faculty please use proper acknowledgement in their course materials and [contact the authors](#) to let them know how you are using the materials.

We would also love to see your adaptation on QUBES! [One adaptation of Calling Bull has already been reshared](#). The materials were adapted for a introductory course in programming at Bates College that included an emphasis on data visualization using the R platform. [Download the course syllabus](#) to see about how the original materials were customized for this digital and computational studies course. [Learn more about how to adapt and re-share teaching materials on QUBES](#).

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