**Fact-checking exercise**

The purpose of this exercise is to teach students how to responsibly pick sources of information, do their own research, and fact-check.

- Have students pick a current news topic and find two articles that report on it from two different resources. One must be from a left-leaning resource and one must be from a right-leaning resource. (We suggest checking out AllSides for articles.)
  - Bonus if the articles have a picture attached related to the story or the story's subject
  - Double bonus if the pictures are two different pictures of the same subject
- Begin by analyzing pictures and comparing them. Ask students what story only the picture is telling.
  - Often times the photo chosen to be attached to the story can reflect the bias of the news media source
- Move on to analyzing the text. How do the two media sources present the same subject? What do they choose to highlight? What do they choose to gloss over? Do they show their bias? How? Is there anything that the two articles agree on?
- Fact-check. Find other sources (preferably unbiased sources) that report on the subject and use all of the sources combined to determine what is fact and what is an exaggeration.
  - Compare and contrast all of your sources. What is consistent? What is exaggerated?
  - Ask again if students can see the bias in the original two articles after doing more research. How do the original articles present their bias?
- Consult fact-checking resources like Snopes or the Washington Post.
- **Ending discussion questions**
  - What is the benefit of getting information from multiple resources?
  - Why is it important to do your own research and draw your own conclusions?
  - What can you do to recognize your own bias? How can you address when your bias affect your conclusions?
Bookmark Exercise

There is a bookmark that has been developed to accompany the FYB. On the bookmark are quotes, phrases, and questions with accompanying page numbers. Pick one of these "quips" and look up the accompanying page number in the book. (Faculty who require copies of the bookmark should email fyb@umd.edu)

1. Find the passage that you think the quip references.
2. Discover the context of the passage within the section of the book.
3. Summarize the point of the passage and how it connects to the book as a whole.
4. Explain why you think this quip/passage/idea was picked to be highlighted on the bookmark.
Introductory discussion questions
These are a selection of discussion questions from the First Year Book website. The following questions may act as good jumping-off points for classroom discussion:

- The author warns against an “us or them” mentality. Can you think of the reasons why this might be dangerous?
- Can you give an example of how not to define demagoguery from chapter 2? Can you explain this? What are the dangers of using that definition?
- How can you distinguish between sincerity and truthfulness? What do you do if you are unable to tell the difference?
- If you have something controversial to say, do you say it online or in person? Do you respond differently online or in person? Why do you think you might respond differently online or in person?
- What do you think are some good standards for argumentation? Fairness? Inclusivity? Civility? Science? What do you think matters when we make our claims?
- What is the role of social media in demagoguery? How does social media heighten the problems of demagoguery?
- Why is demagoguery detrimental to democracy? Are there other areas of life where you have seen demagoguery at work?
- As you know, *Demagoguery and Democracy* is being offered to every first-year student at the University of Maryland in College Park. What do you hope would be the result of so many of your colleagues reading this book?