Navigating Research Misappropriation and Mischaracterization: Facilitating a Workshop on Strategies

Winn W. Wasson
*Syracuse University*

Follow this and additional works at: [https://surface.syr.edu/sul](https://surface.syr.edu/sul)

Recommended Citation
[https://surface.syr.edu/sul/205](https://surface.syr.edu/sul/205)

This Presentation is brought to you for free and open access by the Libraries at SURFACE at Syracuse University. It has been accepted for inclusion in Libraries’ and Librarians’ Publications by an authorized administrator of SURFACE at Syracuse University. For more information, please contact surface@syr.edu.
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

• 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.

Winn W. Wasson
Social Science Librarian
wwwasson@syr.edu