

Call for Papers: Media Fields Special Issue

Media Literacy of the American Alt-Right

Submission Deadline: Mar 15, 2024

Mediascapes have always been the territories of political movements. It is unsurprising then that scholars in the humanities and social sciences have used mediascapes to examine the ideological boundaries of nation-states, trace the dissemination of underlying belief systems, and distinguish between political mainstreams and extremism. While the notion of extremism and the mainstream have historically been characterized as separate realms, we ask whether preemptively making this distinction is misguided. How are the so-called “dark corners” of the web fed by mainstream media? Mainstream or peripheral mediascapes alike are typically understood to be little more than the means by which a belief system—that is, an ideology—is transmitted. It is ideology that has historically distinguished a political movement as such. However, this relationship between ideology and the mediascape has been critically inverted since the emergence of the American Alt-Right movement in the lead-up to the 2016 national elections. With the Alt-Right movement known for online chaos agents, trolls, and conspiracy theories more so than a definite political agenda, scholars have been forced to ask: has the mediascape displaced belief as the defining characteristic of an American political movement?

This special issue of *Media Fields* seeks to build on the work begun by the “Alt-Right Media Literacy Series,” an online speaker series and UC-wide graduate student collective on the study of the American Alt-Right movement. We invite proposals that address these and related questions through the concept of *media literacy*. We define media literacy as the ability to recognize and understand the visual and linguistic coding of Alt-Right media. We ask: how do we develop literacy in the Alt-Right’s mediascape; most simply, how do we recognize Alt-Right media? Because of the online nature of Alt-Right media, and the transnational affinities of global far right movements, we insist that the stakes of this question exceed the United States context.

We welcome proposals from interdisciplinary scholars whose work broadly contributes to the development of “literacy” on the mediascape of the American Alt-Right. Other questions that might be addressed include but are not limited to:

- Intersections and divergences between the Alt-Right movement, white nationalism, and fascism at large
- The impact of trolling on the spread of disinformation and instances of doxxing, harassment, and targeted abuse (Gamergate, Pizzagate)
- The Alt-Right as a media phenomenon. (4chan, Telegram, Gab, Rumble).
- Esoteric, sardonic, anti-feminist, anti-Black, anti-muslim, or anti-semitic dimensions of Alt-Right media
- Online personas: Proud Boys, Trad Wives, NPCs, Normies, Wojaks, Pepes, etc.

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- Definitions of the Alt-Right as a political movement, a style, or tendency
- The temporality and duration of the American Alt-Right. Questions of contemporaneity and historical development.
- The Alt-Right's relationship to crisis and capitalism. Cryptocurrencies, speculative finance, and meme stocks (GameStop, AMC, r/WallStreetBets).
- Comparative treatments of the Alt-Right as a transnational (Europe, Asia, Latin America, Australia) or transpolitical phenomenon.

Email your abstract (250–500 words) and bio to altrightmedialiteracy@gmail.com by **March 15, 2024**.

If you'd like to submit, please consider coming to the Alt-Right Media Literacy Series Symposium on Friday, February 16–Sunday, February 18, 2024. A workshop for this special issue will take place at 4pm on Friday, February 16 and we would love to see you there! See more information [here](#), and [register](#) to attend.