Discussion Group Synopsis
The US political environment is at one of the most heated points in history and many blame the media. What is the media's role in public service during an age where those at the highest levels of power are prone to turning the public against "fake news."

Week 1 — MEDIA’S RELATIONSHIP WITH THE PUBLIC
East Coast and West Coasters were shocked on Election Night 2016 - but had more journalists spent more time in "the flyover states" would Trump's election been less of a shock? This session will explore how the media's relationship with the public eroded and why.

Week 2 — THE PRESS CORPS IN US HISTORY & THE HISTORY OF ‘FAKE NEWS’
The fact of the matter is 'fake news' is not new. In every administration there are various factions that have their own political agendas, identify "friendly reporters" and "leak" their spin. It's up to the journalist to sift through and ask "why is this person(s) telling me this info" separate fact from exaggeration. This session will explore the intersection between the press corps and politicians in the new era of fake news.

Week 3 — FREEDOM OF PRESS VS. CONTROLLED ACCESS: PRESS UNDER TRUMP VS. OBAMA
This session will talk about press credentialing, press room hierarchies, how a media outlet rises in prestige, how and why is media regulated today, and how has it evolved?

Week 4 — IS MEDIA PART OF THE PROBLEM?: THE PRESSURES OF CABLE NEWS & THE QUESTION OF PARTISAN JOURNALISM
This session will explore the questions of whether having cable news channels with partisan leanings is in the public interest or does it further divide an increasingly divided America.

Week 5 — PRESS IN THE US VS. ABROAD
The couple years leading up to 2016, I both lived in the Middle East and subsequently frequently returned for extended periods covering various news stories. Freedom of press is not an unalienable right afforded to everywhere in the Middle East; as a foreign journalist working there, it's a fact of life that you navigate around. But returning home to cover an American election and feeling like I was back in the Middle East came as a
surprise. Candidate and now President Trump's outward public attacks against the press and efforts to discredit the media - which his aides admit to - was eerily reminiscent of places I'd worked in, like Egypt. This session will look at the changing freedom of the press in our current political climate and use the current Presidency as a case study for examination.

**Week 6 — TRANSPARENCY IN SOURCING: ENSURING THE PUBLIC TRUST**
Navigating the world of foreign policy and national security can be tricky and people are less and less comfortable going on the record. Further - cultivating sources are key to breaking news. But in a world of increasingly sophisticated information warfare - like hacking - the journalist's task of holding people in power accountable and simultaneously keeping the public informed and along for the ride, can become a slippery slope and the process of getting to the truth a dangerous game; while navigating shady sources, journalists now more than ever have to be hyper aware of the risk of becoming both a tool and a target of foreign governments. This week will examine both what's at stake in journalism surrounding sourcing and how a journalist actually gets sources.

**Week 7 — ACCESS JOURNALISM**
Proximity to power can be intoxicating but do those who are in a bubble and part of press corps like that of the White House and State Dept risk getting spun? This session will explore how a journalism can get in the middle of the action and see first hand what it's like to get invested in a story, but need to remain objective.

**Week 8 — THE FUTURE OF THE NEWS MEDIA**
There is still no consensus on a business model that makes money in journalism and if organizations that are most apt at good enterprising journalism can’t sustain the resources to do so. Given this, what does that say for the responsibility media has in upholding one of the pillars of democracy that is freedom of press and speech?