SUMMER ASSIGNMENT

Summer Reading and Reflection

- Read You are Now Less Dumb by David McRaney. You can purchase the book, share it with a colleague, or get it from the library.
- It would be in your best interest to read the entire book as it applies psychological theories and concepts that will be covered throughout the course. However, this assignment will require you to make connections from four chapters (Intro., 9, 14, 16).
  - Aim to write concise, scholarly reflections that demonstrate your comprehension of the reading excerpts.
  - A university-level paragraph is a solid 8-10 sentences. A typed paragraph is a ½ page long.

You are Now Less Dumb

By David McRaney

AP Psychology Reading & Reflections

Introduction: Self-Delusion

In the words of David McRaney, this book aims to act as “a humility shock-and-awe campaign designed to help you feel more connected with the community of humanity.” In a paragraph, explain the implications of heuristics, cognitive biases, and logical fallacies on a subject of your choosing – perhaps, politics, social movements, or economics.

Chapter 9: The Backfire Effect

How does the backfire effect either help explain or challenge the proliferation and appeal of fake news and false allegations of fake news? McRaney claims that the internet “unchained [the backfire effect’s] potential.” If true, how would you suggest society combats this?

Chapter 14: Deindividuation

Psychologists Arthur Beaman, Edward Diener, and Soren Svanum’s Halloween study concludes that “the more others there are, the more you dissolve into the collective will of the group. Looting, rioting, lynching, beatings, war, chasing a monster with torches – the switch is always there, and it doesn’t take much to flip it.” Take the role of a parent whose child is about to leave for Freshman year in college – what specific precautions would you take in guiding your daughter/son away from such tendencies?

Chapter 16: The Overjustification Effect

McRaney contends that a “glittery certificate of awesomeness” can “steal your narrative” – in other words, extrinsic rewards can affect how we think about what motivates our behavior. At its worst, conditioning “not only fails; it will also pollute you.” Evaluate the role that the overjustification effect has played in your life. Illustrate with details from a specific event or story (past, present, or even future-tense).