

“Matters of Self-Belief and False Belief in a Post-Truth World”

David Dunning
University of Michigan

The truth is out there, but so is a good deal of misinformation and outright fraud. I describe psychological factors that prompt people to believe versus disbelieve false information but emphasize that the most relevant factor may be the misbeliefs people hold about the self, as well as their ability to tell truth from falsehood. The emphasis will be on findings and themes to introduce in the classroom.

Speaker Bio

David Dunning (BA, Michigan State; PhD, Stanford) is a social psychologist focusing primarily on the psychology underlying human misbelief. His most cited work shows that people hold flattering self-opinions that cannot be justified from objective evidence, work supported by the National Institute of Mental Health, the National Science Foundation, and the Templeton Foundation. He has served as president of both the Society of Experimental Social Psychology and the Society for the Science of Motivation.

David Dunning is Professor at the University of Michigan and a social psychologist focusing primarily on the psychology underlying human misbelief. His most cited work shows that people hold flattering opinions of their character and competence that cannot be justified from objective evidence, work supported by the National Institute of Mental Health, the National Science Foundation, and the Templeton Foundation. An author of over 150 journal articles, book chapters, and general interest pieces, he is half of the team responsible for describing the infamous Dunning-Kruger effect, in which ignorance fails to recognize itself. He has served as president of both the Society of Experimental Social Psychology and the Society for the Science of Motivation. In 2016 he was awarded the Distinguished Lifetime Career Award from the International Society for Self and Identity, and has been a fellow at the Center for Advanced Studies in the Behavioral Sciences. He holds a BA from Michigan State University and a PhD from Stanford University, both in psychology.