

The Media

the fourth state

US Government POS 2041

Ch. 6

For Discussion...

- Why is a free press essential to democracy ?
- How free do you think our media is?
- How many hours a week do you watch TV? How do you think TV has affected your thinking about gov & politics? About social justice? About crime? The economy? If you turned off your TV/Internet for a month, would it bother you?

Discussions cont'd

- By the time you graduated from high school, you will have spent more time watching TV than in class (p121 Welch)
- Freedom of speech is an amendment right & one which is fiercely guarded by American media
 - Despite the large numbers of media –radio, satellite, electronic, printed which exist in the US, there is very little variation in what and how the content of what's reported on national issues

Cartoon: Do you find it inappropriate?



<http://www.thedailyshow.com/watch/mon-october-12-2009/cnn-leaves-it-there>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IUPMjC9mq5Y>

Cultivating Media literacy

- <http://libguides.valenciacollege.edu/fakeneWS>

Authority is Constructed and Contextual

Think critically about information – whether it's from a blog post, a book, or a peer-reviewed journal article. Ask questions about the author(s), the purpose, and the context of the information. Recognize the value of diverse ideas and world views.

How do you determine the credibility of a source?

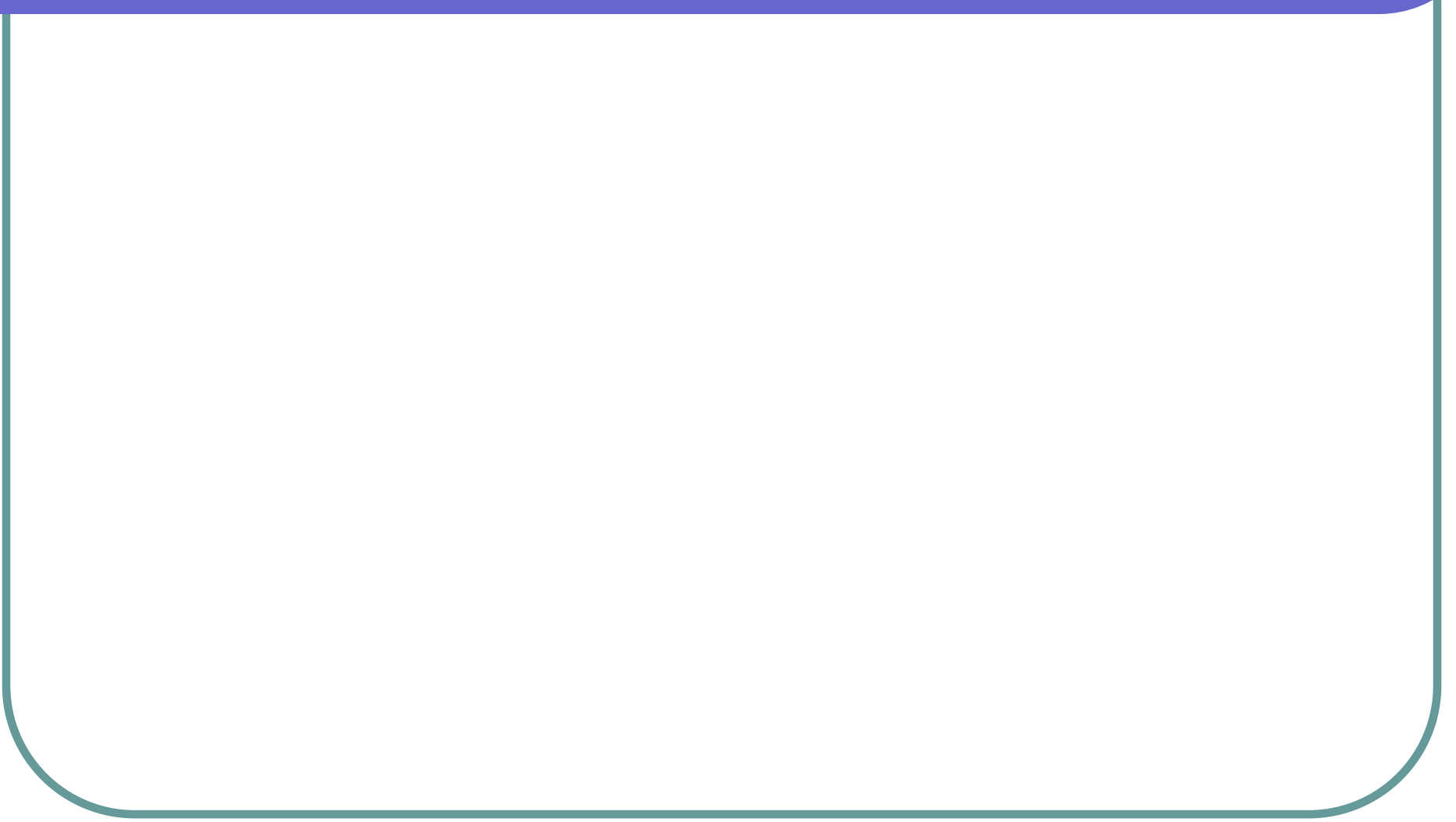
What makes a source authoritative?

What points of view might be missing?

Whose voice does the information represent?

Information resources reflect their creators' expertise and credibility, and are evaluated based on the specific information need and the context in which the information will be used. Authority is constructed in that various communities may recognize different types of authority. It is contextual in that the information need may help to determine the level of authority required. (ACRL Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education, 2015)





Types of Media

- Of all the choice of media, television (broadcast) dominates
 - As a result, constant attempts by gov to manipulate their coverage
 - Eg. Media coverage of the war, but not of coffins coming home
- Local news tend to be more friendly to politicians
- Radio repeats headlines without visuals
- Niche Media

Importance of print media

- 3 reasons why news paper & print media remain main news sources
 - Broadcast media rely on leading print media to set their own news agendas
 - Print media provides extensive analysis
 - Educated & influential folks rely on print media to influence and inform their views on social, political & economic decisions

Immediacy of internet

- Internet news continue to challenge traditional media
 - its immediacy, blogs are shaping mainstream political views
- Historically news paper - the dominant news source
- Was not until 1920s with the advent of radio and the idea of “mass media “ was introduced
- TV came in 1950’s & has been the dominant & central means of broadcasting since

Atomization of Media- the fringe media

- Despite the dominance & concentration of media, the introduction of cable & internet has led to media catering to narrow viewing markets eg.
 - Ethnic cable TV
 - C-SPAN

Citizen Journalism

- Provide a sort of immediacy of the news and influence mainstream journalism
- Bloggers
- Twitter
- Online news

- Non –profit Journalism organizations: privately funded, eg., Cato or Hoover Institutes

- Major newspapers post their news on the internet
- 1/3 of Americans report that they obtain their news from late night comedies
- Even politicians make regular appearances on late night comedies
- The goal of fringe media is entertainment; therefore less emphasis is placed on accuracy, quality of analysis
 - Some pay for their stories

Media Power in American Politics

- News influence politics
 - Can make or break chances of politicians
 - Can shape public opinion
- Relationship between media & politicians considered both:
 - ***symbiotic*** – relationship between media politicians work to mutual advantage of both
 - ***Adversarial*** – the relationship is not mutual & more likely antagonistic

Leaks in media

- Popular with media, especially to garner readerships/viewers or to discredit someone
- Sometimes politicians or depts. leak info to media
- Popular recent leak was re CIA spy Valerie Plame, whose identity was released to the press
 - Usually a disclosure is made about politicians, major gov's decisions
- More recently the conviction of Officer Manning for the Wiki Leaks

Media shaping events

- Media has far reaching consequences political consequences in America society
- Media shaped 3 major events
 - Media's role in Civil Rights Movements
 - Media's coverage compelled Nixon to pull out of Vietnam
 - Media was critical in breaking the Watergate Affairs

Sources of Media Power

Agenda Setting

- Who sets the agenda on what receives coverage?
- Issues compete for coverage. Who decides?
- Media has to be persuaded that item is newsworthy

Framing

- How media influences how events & issues are interpreted by the public

Priming

- Process of preparing the public to take a particular view of an event
- Citizens rarely meet their politicians in person, yet they frame their image of them based on media presentation

The Rise of Adversarial & Partisan Journalism

- Pre Vietnam, politicians enjoyed a cordial relationship with the media & received positive coverage
- Media's criticism of Nixon's position on Vietnam
- Popular coverage of Bush after 911
- But his decision to go to war in Iraq was severely criticized by media

Regulation of the Broadcast Media - FCC

- Fed. Communications Commission (FCC)
- Gov does not control media, but regulates contents, licensing, ownership of broadcast media
- Print media free from gov interference, but still regulated by FCC
- 1996 regulations against concentration of ownership removed

Fed regulations include

- *Equal Time Rule* for political candidates
- *Right of Rebuttal*: individuals right to respond to personal attacks on media
- *Fairness Doctrine* ceased in 1985
 - Media must give equal time to opposing sides of broadcasted controversial issues

Organization & Ownership of Media

- Number of national news media is small;
 - But ownership is in the hands of large conglomerates
- National & local news heavily influenced by few larger voices, eg.
 - NY Times, Washington Post, CNN
- Leads to *homogenization* of the news & trends
 - Considerable influence on the political process

Nationalization of the News

- Homogenization of the news in the US contributes to the nationalization of our political views
- Nationalization of news: mainstream news
 - National news media cover more or less same events
 - Information almost uniformly presented
 - All seem to draw from each other/ same source

Alternative sources

- Now being challenged by alternative news sources:
 - Internet news focus on generating different points of views, blogs, etc.
 - Radio & print media aimed exclusively at certain racial or religious segments of pop
 - Eg. Some radio programs in Atlanta tried to distort the Michael Vick's indictment as racially motivated
 - People's Radio Network play to the ultra-conservative sentiments of mid-westerners

3 Factors influence media coverage

- Journalist/news producers
- News sources/subjects
- The news audience/consumer

Journalists

- Views on the news not objective
- Journalists interpret & color news with their own biases
 - Eg Liberal bias, Conservative bias
- Tendencies toward sensationalizing of reporting the news

Subjects of News

- Those who are the subject of the news also influence news coverage
- Politicians cultivate relationships with reporters in order to portray certain image
- During Katrina disaster in New Orleans, Pres Bush attempted to reverse negative reports of his handling the disaster by visiting the area- full media coverage

The Power of Consumers

- Media is a business & seeks to make profits, hence cater to needs of consumers
- Media caters heavily to affluent consumers
- Upscale Americans are overrepresented as consumers of news & public affairs
- Issues of poverty, lower economic class issues receive poor/nil coverage

Media & Conflict

- While media is willing to respond to concerns of the affluent, they are also obliged to pay attention to protests which is a means by which the poor can get their message across

Key Terms

- Fairness Doctrine
- Agenda Setting
- Priming
- Framing
- Sound bites
- Symbiotic relationship
- Adversarial relationship
- Leaks
- Spin