Objective: This recitation has two goals: Review of TV Deconstruction lessons and Test #2 Preparation session

I.Review Deconstructing Television news: Major takeaway is to be active, not passive, in TV news consumption.

Savvy consumers know the different types of reports: (breaking, planned major events, taped stories for broadcast, live reporting) and what to expect from each.

Knowing the Process helps set realistic expectations: based on impacts of sweeps and ratings.

Our handy practical guide to deconstructing tv stories. Repeat the workbook method:

- Summarize the story. Does the evidence support the main point?
- Assess evidence quality and type;
- Ask if the reporter opened the freezer
- Evaluate sources
- Check for transparency about what reporter does and does not know
- Are you being manipulated by video, audio or production techniques?
- Does the reporter put the story in context?
- Is the story fair, balanced, fair to the evidence?
- Is emotion swamping your search for evidence and reliable sources?

Marcy's rules for finding winners and sinners:

Sinners: show/refer to only one point of view; use language and production techniques to hype/manipulate emotion; Take what they are given without independent reporting; rely on a single eyewitness and few or no other sources; Distract or manipulate you with sound (music, add-ins, weasel words)

Winners: look for all sides in a controversy; look for first-hand accounts, strong sources, independent and verified information; Cover all 5 Ws and the H; include verification, transparency and context.

II. Deconstructing TV news exercise

Television news poses special challenges to the news consumer: moving images, audio, production effects, severe time-compression, etc. To help students understand the impact of how these entertainment-media characteristics shape their perception of the quality of the underlying journalism, this exercise can proceed in a few ways:

1. One option is to give students the chance to watch a news clip several times: first, with the sound turned off; second, with the video turned off; and third, with everything normal. The students should make three lists, where each time they watch or listen to the video, the students should write down what stands out the most to them. Afterwards, discuss the differences and any difficulties that might arise for the news consumer.
2. A second option is to give students a video to watch from foreign news, such as Telemundo or some of the Japanese news broadcasts. (Ideally, the instructor

should pick a video in a language that students are not fluent in.) Because many of the conventions of TV news have been widely adopted globally, watching a news broadcast in a foreign language can help reveal just how much information is being communicated non-verbally. Ask the students to write down what they think is going on in the story, and to take note of any entertainment effects (music, graphics, etc.) that clue them in on "how to think" about the story. Ideally, the instructor will know the full details and context of the news clip to be able to explain to the students afterwards what they got right and wrong. (To help find some good examples, you may look on YouTube since some foreign-language videos have subtitles translated into English, which can be turned on and off.)

III. Preparing for the 2nd test

Students can expect the same type of test again: they will answer a couple of questions drawn from each of the lectures. They will be graded on: Their knowledge of the concepts and facts, AND…Their ability to apply the course material in thoughtful analysis, <u>illustrated with examples from the readings (including "The Message Machine") and reading their news home page.</u> We won't re-test them on Lectures 1-6, but they should be able to use concepts.

Lectures 7-12 (Fairness & Bias through Deconstructing TV News)

7: Balance, Fairness, Bias: We define these terms and ask them to use them our way in this course.

Balance is an almost-mathematical assessment of pro-con information, used in stories in which the facts or conclusions are in dispute.

Fairness comes in two flavors: fairness to an individual/group in the news AND fairness to the evidence. Mindless balance (i.e. balancing a Holocaust story with Holocaust deniers) <u>can</u> be unfair to the truth.

Bias is a pattern of unfairness as opposed to an isolated incident/mistake/sloppiness. Bias is evident and persistent predisposition for or against a person/group or idea.

Cognitive dissonance is our discomfort when our actions are inconsistent with our beliefs/"knowledge". The attempt to avoid that feeling leads us to dismiss information that challenges our beliefs/"knowledge", leads us to seek only information that comfirms our beliefs and can cause us to mis-remember sources of information.

Audience bias or "own bias" is important in assessing news media bias.

Students should be able to define: cognitive dissonance, confirmation bias, "Sleeper Effect" (which leads us to mis-remember sources, re-attributing information that supports our beliefs to the most credible source.)

8:Truth and Verification: Journalistic truth is like scientific truth, provisional. It changes with new evidence over time. Why is this important for news consumers to understand?

The Verification process: Review the difference between assertion and verification. REMEMBER: EVIDENCE IS DIRECT OR INDIRECT, NOT SOURCES. Sources can provide either provide direct or indirect evidence.

The "Open The Freezer" metaphor. What does it mean? Why is it important for news consumers?

Lessons for a news consumer: Follow a story over time and ask to what degree the reporter has opened the freezer.

Ask three key questions at the conclusion of every story:

What do I know?

How do I know it?

What Don't I Know?

Explaining what you don't know and how you do know what you know is transparency.

Context is information external to the immediate event or person that adds meaning or helps a news consumer make sense of what they are seeing/reading.

9: Evaluating Sources

IMVAIN.

If they don't know how to do source evaluation, they are sunk

The sourcing guidelines. (Independent vs. self-interested; authoritative vs. uninformed; named vs. un-named; Sources who verify vs. sources who assert; multiple vs. single;)

This is important to review in some detail. Remember, students need to WEIGH overall value of a particular source and the body of sources in a story.

Evidence (Direct is eyewitnesses, documents, photos or video. Indirect is secondary sources such as official (but briefed) official spokespersons, other press accounts, and listings that indicate the existence of direct sources.

10: Deconstructing the news: Our handy practical guide to deconstructing stories.

Drill and repeat the workbook method: Summarize; test headline and lead; assess evidence; evaluate sources; ask if the reporter opened the freezer; check for transparency about what reporter does and does not know; check for useful context; Are the 5ws&H answered; check fairness and balance.

11. The Power of Images as a powerful way to inform, verify and move people but with the danger of oversimplification and temptations to manipulate.

Still Photos: Understand, Watch for (and demand) these labels: "Composite, illustration, digitally altered/manipulated, file photo, archive photo." News consumers should also pay attention to photo credits and captions in judging the reliability of visual information.

On TV, the amount of time cable devotes to a story doesn't necessarily equal its importance. The amount of entertainment style post-production work (graphics, added music or sound effects, etc) is an important signal to consumers that the guts of the piece are either not there or had to be jazzed up to hold your interest.

Students should also understand the basic differences between local, network, cable, public and web tv news.

But most of all, students should appreciate TV's ability to create eyewitness experiences and tell powerful and emotional stories, as well as its limitations(don't make it your only source of news).

12: Deconstructing Television news: Major takeaway is that to be active, not passive, in TV news consumption.

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   Sinners: show/refer to only one point of view; use language and production techniques to hype/manipulate emotion; Take what they are given without independent reporting; rely on a single eyewitness and few or no other sources; Distract or manipulate you with sound (music, add-ins, weasel words)

   Winners: look for all sides in a controversy; look for first-hand accounts, strong sources, independent and verified information; Cover all 5 Ws and the H; include verification, transparency and context.

   Use recent lecture examples on the 60 Minutes report on computer dumping to make these points,

Lectures 1-6 (A speed drill)

3. The Gutenberg Variations: Compare and Contrast the Gutenberg and Internet revolutions
4. Using examples, demonstrate you understand the difference between media and news media and that you are accurate in applying the idea of our primal need for information that alerts, diverts and connects us.
5. The Napoleonic Variations: Why governments fear the pen as much or more than the sword and what this means to journalism's practitioners and consumers
6. Know the reading cases well enough to write clearly about WikiLeaks (or SWIFT and or Google in China) as examples of the battle to control information.
7. Know your neighborhood, Know your GRID: Students need gin-clear understanding of the differences between information types and a firm handle on the values of verification, independence and accountability. They need to use elements of the grid in constructing arguments about the difference between journalism and all other information.
8. The First Amendment Variations: students need to be clear on No Prior Restraint , the exceptions, and the intent of the founders (It's not the press that's protected, it's the press' ability to protect the people from government abuses) and they need to be able to write clearly about the collision between Free Press rights and other human rights such as privacy and national security. Refresh their memories on the Fourth Estate's "Watchdog Role" in curbing tyrannical tendencies of the other estates of power.
9. Oy, the Tension(s): Students need to be skillful in describing news decisions as the product of judgment, the weighing of importance vs. interest and public service vs. commercial success. The news drivers are essential vocabulary for constructing arguments about these ideas.
10. VIA: What is Recognizing and clearly describing fine distinctions…Opinion's place in the News Neighborhood and who gets the unique **007 License to Opine.** Students need to know the difference between all the types of acceptable Opinion Journalism and they need to know what all the customary labels mean. Further, they must be able to recognize the rhetorical devices that tell a consumer they are in Opinion World, whether or not it has been labeled correctly.