

(ANIMATION: Wolf Image fades in, then on next click, image changes to the Three Little Pigs.)

ASK: Who is this? (wolf)

He huffed and...(puffed)

And why was he huffing and puffing? (to blow the house down)

(NOW CLICK TO GET THE SCARED LITTLE PIGS.)

ASK: Why are these poor little guys running?

What did you learn about wolves from this story?

(SPECIAL NOTE TO LECTURERS: YOU’LL TELL THE STORY BETTER IF YOU HAVE READ “The True Story of The Three Little Pigs,” by Jon Scieszka, Viking, 1989, a million-seller)



The story of the three little pigs and the big bad wolf is a fairy tale but it still satisfies the human need for the kinds of information for which humans have a primal need:

It diverts...with an entertaining story about clever and stupid pigs and a dramatic climax.

It connects... it is one of those four archetypal campfire stories we've talked about, with characters we can universally relate to and learn from.

And it even alerts by teaching us to beware of Big Bad Wolves.

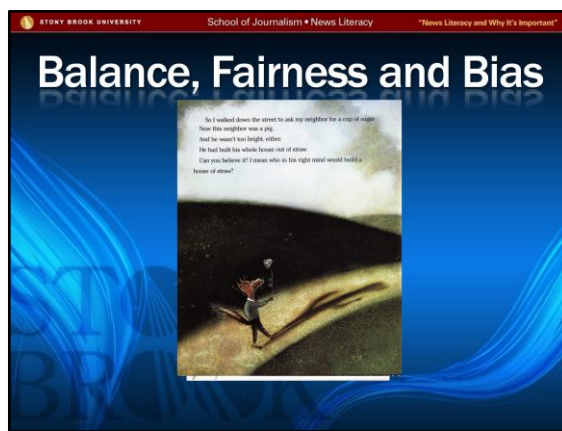
But you're not a toddler anymore...What's missing from the story?

(Keep asking until they get lukewarm.)

Finally, a smart guy from Brooklyn, Jon Scieszka (Pronounced SHESS-ka like Fresca), thought hard about what he'd been told since he was a little kid and he went after the rest of the story...



And in 1989, Scieszka convinced Viking Publishing to publish the wolf's side of the story...



(ANIMATION: First image: Chalkboard of Sugar and Sneeze. Next click, Wolf out to borrow sugar)

A Wolf... that's Alexander T. Wolf... told Scieszka The whole misunderstanding started wit' a cup of sugar and a sneeze...

Just because wolves eat cute little rabbits and deer and pigs, people assume da worst. What...you don't eat chickens and cows and pigs?

Anyhow, A. Wolf was baking his granny a birthday cake and didn't have enough sugar.

So he goes to see his neighbor, who is a pig.

This pig, he's kind of a flake...'built his house outta grass. The wolf knocks and that flimsy grass door falls right in.

He Yoo-Hoos in the door. *"Little Pig, Little Pig, are you in?"*

Still no answer. And right about then, bits of straw from the house tickle his nose and make him sneeze.

A really huuuuge sneeze.

And that stoopid grass house goes kablooney.



And in the middle of all that straw??? Dead pig.
Rude little porker had been home the whole time and got killed in the wreckage.

The wolf knows it'd be a sin to waste food. But he still needs a cup of sugar for his Granny's birthday cake.

So on he goes to the pig's brother up the road...

'Second little pig can't come to the door, hollers that he's busy shaving "*the hairs on his chinny, chin, chin.*"

Something in that hay must have stuck in the wolf's big nose...Here comes another sneeze...and wouldn't you know it...another tragic fatality.

The smell of rotting meat can really drive down property values. Plus, hello? Ever heard of Trichinosis or Paragonimus? It's poor citizenship to leave pork lying around.

So A Wolf does everybody a favor and cleans up that bacterial hazard, which is the important function of wolves in any ecosystem: recycling

He's really full now...But he still needs that cup of sugar for his granny's cake, so up the road he goes.

The third pig must be brains of the family. He's got a brick house. But he also has an attitude. He says he won't give the wolf any sugar for the birthday cake, but then he goes and says "*And your old granny can sit on a pin!*"

Getting up in the grill of A Wolf like that is not very sensible. In fact, during the jailhouse interview, he admits the pig talking smack about his granny made him a little crazy. And when the cops showed up, it's true that A Wolf was trying to break down the door.



A wolf can't get a fair shake from the porcine news media. You never hear that the average North American wolf is only 79 pounds, while the average North American hog is 250 pounds at adulthood, with huge tusks. Three yearlings are a good match for any wolf.

But The Daily Pig wrote this totally one-sided story and never even asked the wolf's side.

And then it went viral and even got made into a movie.

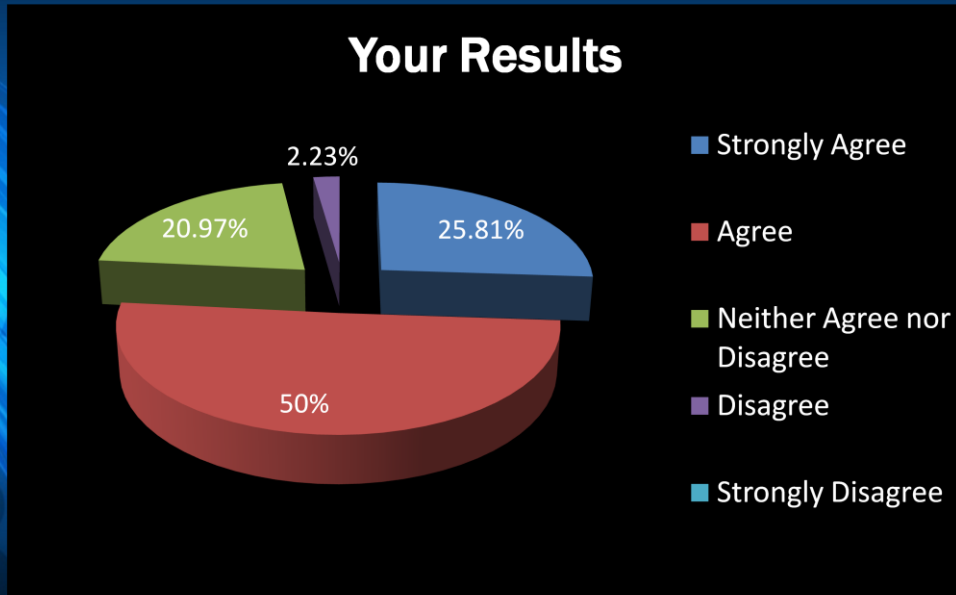
So, that's what is missing from the fairy tale of the three little pigs and the big bad wolf...The wolf's side of the story.

ASK: What's the serious lesson we can learn from Jon Scieszka's re-telling of the fairy tale?



What's your opinion?

"Most news outlets exhibit bias"



Here's what you and your classmates said at the beginning of the semester when asked if Most News Outlets Exhibit Bias.

25.861% strongly agree

50% agree

20.97% neither agree nor disagree

3.226% disagree

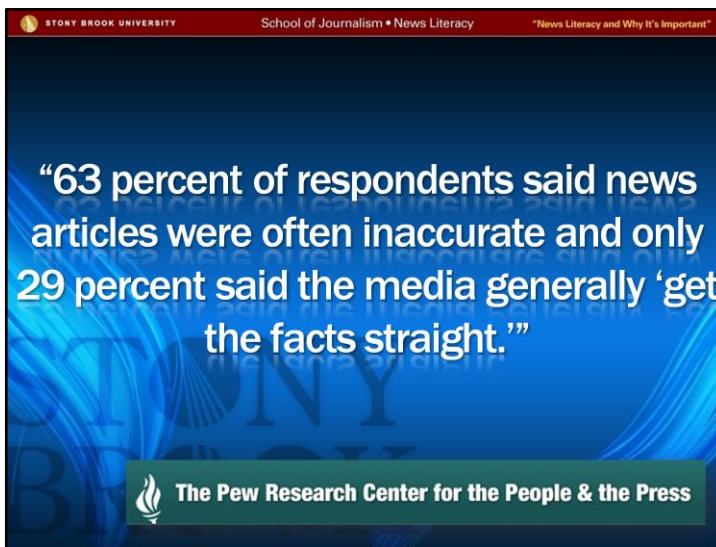
0% strongly disagree

ASK:

Why should we care if there is bias?

Why do you believe there is bias?

What evidence do you cite?



Most Americans share your opinion...that it's hard to get the straight story, according to the Pew Center's last poll on the topic.

Ask: Why should we care that the news media has this reputation?

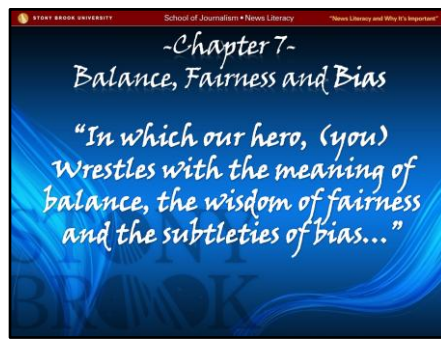
It's easy to see, isn't it?

"All reporters are liberals...OR

"Reporters were so cozy with their bigshot White House sources, they didn't bother to check the facts before the Iraq War."

Is this a case of the wisdom of the crowds: if everyone thinks it, it must be true?

Or is this like Obama's birth certificate... the masses are sometimes asses?



We have been telling you all semester to find the news neighborhood when hunting the reliable information you need to be a powerful citizen. Meanwhile, several companies in the news business have made news media bias the cornerstone of their marketing campaigns.

They sling the charge at their competitors without seeming to care that they've now trained news consumers to distrust journalism. When we hear the phrase "News media" the next thing we think is "Bias."

It's an easy charge to make. Few will argue with you. But if you're going to assert that journalism is slanted, how do you prove it?

Today, we're going right into the heart of the controversy so you can decide for yourself what is balance, what is fairness, and what is bias, both in the news media and ...

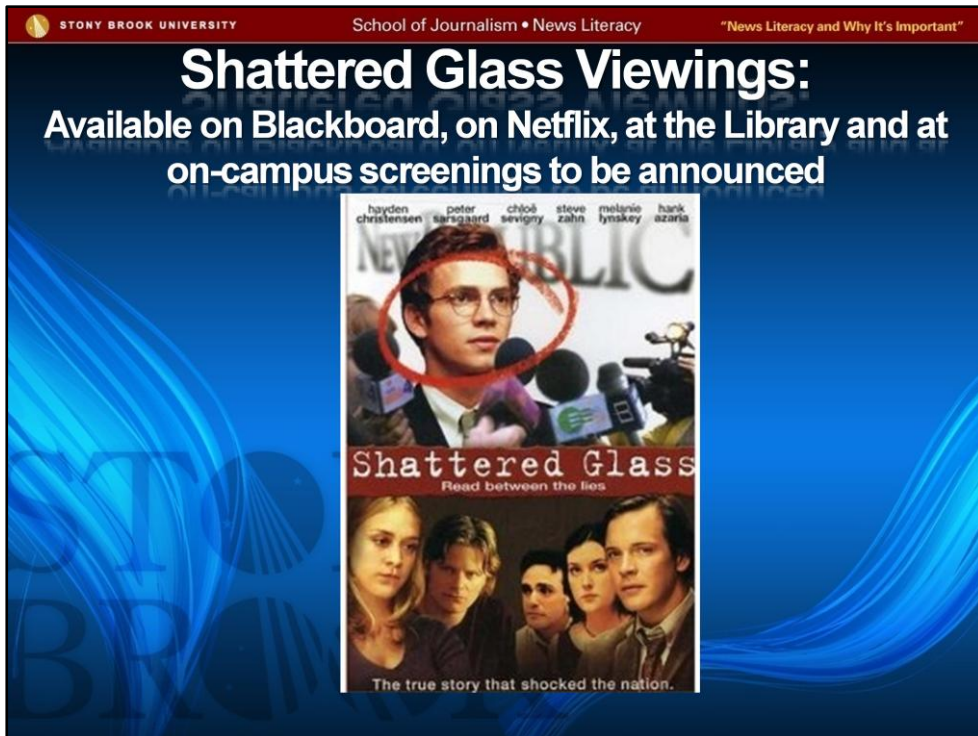
...inside **your** skull.

Housekeeping



News Matters





In a week, you'll be assigned to watch Shattered Glass and write about it. Wait until after next lecture to do so, so you'll have the concepts you need. A streaming copy will be available to you on BlackBoard. Plus you can order it from Netflix. Or watch one of the copies at the Library. Or by attending one of two on-campus screenings set up by the Center for News Literacy.



[CLICK TO LAUNCH 2-MINUTE TRAILER OF SHATTERED GLASS](#)



Change your Homepage.
From now on, your news quiz questions
will be selected from bbcnews

<http://www.bbcamerica.com/content/329/index.jsp>

Three Questions Today:

- How do we know if a news article is fair?
- How do we know if a news outlet is biased?
- What's the difference between news media bias and audience bias?

Right Then...where were we?

Pigs, Wolves and Bias.

Here's how we'll think about bias today,
through these three questions



Let's take a more serious look at this question of balance, fairness and bias...

Everyone know what an obituary is?

True story: Two scholars looked at the obituaries published in the Chicago Tribune and found there were twice as many women dying as men...which would be bad news for our species, except that the vital statistics bureau's data showed women and men die off in approximately equal numbers in Chicago, the newspapers just choose to devote more attention to the deaths of men.

So why is it that the deaths of men (at age 72 on average at that time) were less newsworthy than the deaths of women?(age 79)

ASK: Is it bias? If so, what kind? Sexism? Classism? Job-ism?

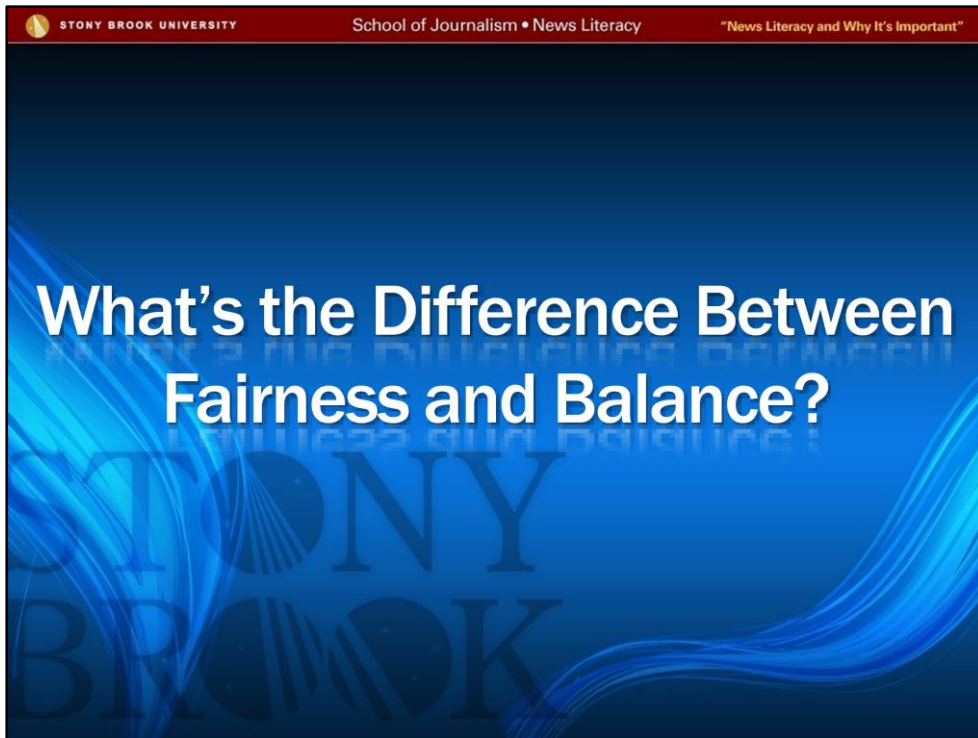
What are other explanations for the imbalance? (reflects who got top jobs, what jobs were "newsworthy", fact that wife is around to memorialize hubby, but kids don't bother for Ma.) **Whose bias** are reflected in those data?

So, in other words...bias is a complicated thing.

That doesn't mean we shrug and say, "Ech! Too complicated!"

As usual in News Literacy, it means we learn how to grab hold of careful distinctions...Measure precisely, judge wisely, see clearly.


So let's look at some key terms and see how they relate to bias...



What's "fairness" and "balance" and what's the difference between the two?
(A series of slides follows)

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Key Definitions

Main Entry: **balance** 
Pronunciation: \ˈbɑ-lən(t)s\
Function: *noun*
Etymology: Middle English, from Anglo-French, from Vulgar Latin **bilancia*, from Late Latin *bilanc-*, *bilanx* having two scalepans, from Latin *bi-* + *lanc-*, *lanx* plate
Date: 13th century

Balance: Equality between the totals of the two (or more) sides of the account. Balance is more technical; a quantitative measurement.

Slide: Key Definitions...balance

(an equity, almost a mathematical equivalence).

ASK: When is it appropriate for a story to be carefully...point-counterpoint-rebuttal-re-rebuttal...balanced?

(Wrap their answers up with...)


“A dispute between two sides when there is conflicting evidence, or points of view, and no definitive evidence to suggest one side is right.”

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What Is Balance?

Discord Fills Washington on Possible Libya Intervention

"He keeps reminding us that the best revolutions are completely organic," the senior official said, quoting the president.



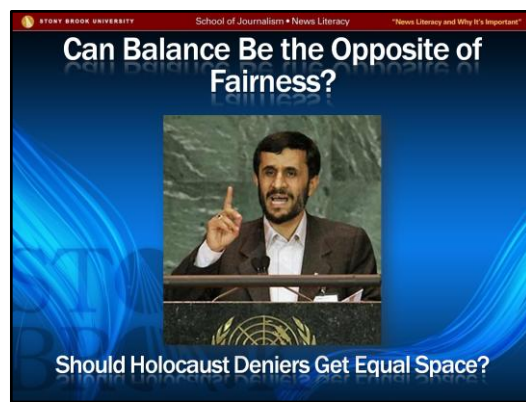
At the same time, there are persistent voices – in Congress and even inside the administration – arguing that Mr. Obama is moving too slowly. They contend that there is too much concern about perceptions, and that the White House is too squeamish because of Iraq.

Furthermore, they say a military caught up in two difficult wars has exaggerated the risks of imposing a no-fly zone over Libya, the tactic discussed most often.

For example: Story on Libyan intervention. Who is right? Obama and those who say we can't take sides?

Critics who say we are betraying democracy?

When the answer is unknown or subject to debate, you want an almost mathematical balancing of points of view.



Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad calls the extermination of six million Jews during World War II "a myth."

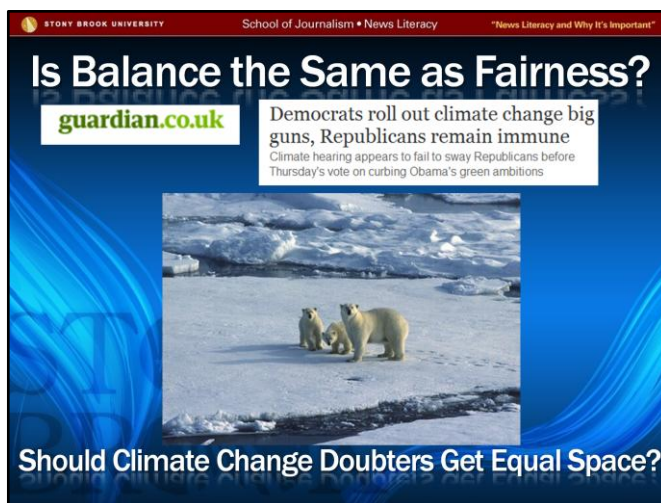
In writing about the holocaust should Holocaust deniers like Mahmoud be given equal time, equal space?

Expecting a heroic place in history, The Third Reich kept precise and copious documents and photos and films of their systematic extermination of Jews. Those are the basis for the War Crimes Tribunal's estimate that Nazi Germany killed 6 million Jews.

In the trial at Nuremberg, top Nazi officials did not deny what they had done. Physical evidence at the death camps and at the sites of massacres corroborated the testimony of witnesses. Allied soldiers, liberating prison camps, saw it with their own eyes.

Would a "balanced" news report about the holocaust give equal time to people who say the holocaust is a myth propagated to generate sympathy for Israel?

Would that be fair or unfair? To whom? (to consumers, to the evidence.)



So in cases like the Holocaust, a precisely measured “balance” could be inaccurate, giving undue weight to falsehood or unsupported assertions.

But what about scientific debates?

The majority of climate scientists have found that there is evidence the Earth’s climate is changing in unusual ways. And the majority conclude human activity is a factor.

So, should news reports give a balanced amount of time or space to those who say the climate isn’t changing at all or that it’s merely a cycle?


Now...how about the **rate** of climate change, or the best **counter measures**? Authoritative scientists disagree about the rate of change and the steps that will reverse the trend...Should some kind of measure of balance come back into play in those reports?

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2011/mar/08/democrats-climate-change-big-guns-republicans>

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/debate/article-1230113/The-devastating-book-debunks-climate-change.html>



Key Definitions

Main Entry: **fair** 

Pronunciation: \ˈfer\

Function: *adjective*

Etymology: Middle English *fager*, *fair*, from Old English *fæger*; akin to Old High German *fagar* beautiful

Date: before 12th century

Fairness: Marked by impartiality and honesty. Free from self-interest, prejudice, or favoritism. Being *fair to the evidence*.

That's why we offer you another concept: Fairness.

What might we mean by "Fair to the Evidence?"

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Finding Fairness

- Obvious effort to include relevant perspectives
- People, Organizations get to respond to negative charges
 - Avoids loaded words
- Avoids prejudicial photos/presentation
- Provides *context* and *transparency*.

If fair reporting is what you want...how do you check out the news for fairness? Sometimes what's not in a report is as important as what IS in a report.

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Fair, Unfair, or Biased?



School Bus Aide Busted Dealing Methadone

Here's a local news report. As you watch, pay attention to what is included and what is missing.



NEWSFELLOW: NEWS FELLOW: LINK (INSERT) VIDEO TO THIS SLIDE AND SELECT "START AUTOMATICALLY"

Is this report fair? Is it biased? Is it neither?
ASK: What would it take to prove FOX 5 is BIASED against the bus driver (or in favor of the kid)?

What are other possible reasons this particular story was unfair?

(Sloppiness, bad editing, time constraints, etc.).

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Key Definitions

Main Entry: **¹bi·as** 
Pronunciation: \ˈbi-əs\
Function: *noun*
Etymology: Middle French *biais*
Date: 1530

Bias: A predisposition that distorts your ability to fairly weigh the evidence and prevents you from reaching a fair or accurate judgment.

We can't look into someone's head and see bias. But we can look at what they have done in the past to see if there is evidence of a predisposition.

ASK: Is being unfair in a story the same thing as being biased?

When people say the news media is biased, is this what they mean?

What is the evidence?

Is bias the only conclusion you can draw from the evidence you have?



May 30, 2005, Natalee Holloway disappears on the final night of her five-day vacation with friends in Aruba. The high school senior's story gets saturation coverage on cable news channels, with CNN's Nancy Grace leading the way.

July 18, 2005, Latoiya Figueroa disappears shortly after a doctor's appointment in West Philadelphia. Her case gets no national coverage until angry activists beg Nancy Grace and other hosts to give a fraction of their attention to the disappearance of LaToiya.

“When black women disappear,” “Essence” magazine wrote in June of that year, “The silence can be deafening.”

The differential coverage over time is quantifiable and demonstrates clear bias...but on whose part? Is the audience...the ratings...partially to blame?

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How to Spot Bias

- Look for a *pattern* of unfairness over time
 - Compare a variety of news outlets - especially to search for a bias by omission
 - Evidence is the essence of a credible conclusion.

SLIDE: How to Spot Bias

- ✓ Look for a consistent pattern of unfairness over time.
- ✓ Compare news reports from a variety of sources, especially to search for a bias by omission
- ✓ Avoid using inference to prove bias. Look for evidence.



Point: Here's an example of a pattern of repeated obvious animus against one person in news coverage.

The Post makes no secret of its dislike for Hillary Clinton.

During the presidential campaign, Hillary was “angry,” the “strife of the party” making “desperate” claims about her delegate count. Then, after the “Super Tuesday” primary contests, they called her a “Super Loser” ...and when she campaigned on the claim that as President she would be able to handle bad men, they made this montage on page one. More recently, the Post decided the house she went looking for was...“Castle Clinton.”

ASK: What do you think?

Is that a pattern?

Could you compare the Post to other outlets and find similar words used?

Is there evidence enough to make a credible charge of bias?



This aired during the New Year's Day (2007) broadcast of The Situation Room with Wolf Blitzer on CNN.

The story was about the search for Al Qaeda leader **Osama** Bin Laden.

At that time, opponents of presidential candidate Barack **Obama** were playing on American misunderstanding and prejudice against Islam by emphasizing Obama's full name "Barack Hussein Obama" and his father's religious upbringing (born Muslim, but rejected the faith).

So, without doing too much psycho-analysis, is this a simple typo? Or is it evidence of bias?

The irony: Remember, many of those same activists accuse CNN of being a tool of radical Islam.

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Common Flaws in "Bias" Claims


- *"The news media is biased"* is an over-generalization. Some outlets, maybe.
- Opinion Journalism by an organization doesn't necessarily prove there's slant in the news coverage.
- Guilt by association is a fallacy.

SLIDE: How to Assess Bias

- ✓ A credible assessment of bias must apply to a single news outlet or story, not the *"news media."*
- ✓ Remember: Bias involves the news reporting by an outlet, not its opinion journalism. (By definition an opinion story has a bias.)
- ✓ There IS a bias for conflict. DUH!

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**The stronger the emotion,
The more likely bias will be charged:**



- Politics
- Race and Gender
- Social Issues
- Religion

The accusation of bias most often rears its ugly head on hot-button topics: Politics, race, religion and gender and social issues. ASK: Why is that?

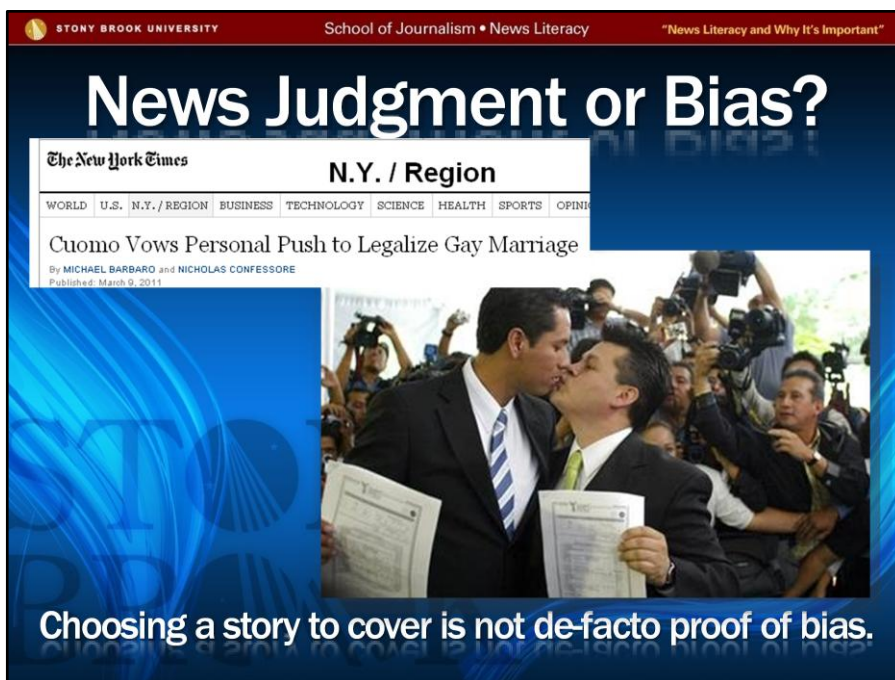
Issues that are emotional and personal, that generate strong feeling and partisanship, tend to cause people to see bias in anything that does not support their feelings and beliefs or praise the group that is central to their identity.



Rep. Peter King, R-NY, who represents western Long Island, is Chairman of the House Committee on Homeland Security. His decision to convene hearings to investigate radicalization of young Muslims in America has been criticized as a return to McCarthyite fear-mongering that will only succeed in reinforcing negative stereotypes about Muslim Americans.. .

ASK: Is CNN's the decision to cover the hearings evidence of bias? What is the evidence?

<http://www.foxnews.com/politics/2011/03/10/king-draws-firing-radicalization-hearings-majority-supports-discussion/>
<http://www.csmonitor.com/USA/Politics/2011/0310/Peter-King-hearing-shows-sharply-polarized-attitudes-toward-Islam>



Depending on who you talk to, only three to five percent of the US population is gay. Yet Governor Cuomo's intention to legalize marriage for gay New Yorkers was treated as major news.

ASK: What kind of evidence would support a charge of bias?

ASK: Break this story down for me...What are the drivers?

<http://www.nytimes.com/2011/03/10/nyregion/10marriage.html?partner=rss&emc=rss>

News Judgment or Bias?



Choosing a story to cover is not de-facto proof of bias.

The Rev. Phelps' Westboro Baptist Church, which protests outside funerals of U.S. Soldiers, has 71 members...in a nation of 310 million people.

Yes, it's outrageous, but doesn't this demonstrate bias?

ASK: Is attention to these protests an example of pro-gay bias? Anti-gay bias?

ASK: Break it down for me...What are the drivers?

ASK: What kind of evidence would support a charge of bias?

The Washington Post

NEWS | LOCAL | POLITICS | SPORTS | OPINIONS | BUSINESS | ARTS & LIVING | GOING OUT GUIDE | JOBS | CARS | REAL ESTATE | SHOPPING

Supreme Court rules First Amendment protects church's right to picket funerals



"Speech is powerful. It can ...inflict great pain. We cannot react to that pain by punishing the speaker. As a Nation we have chosen a different course - to protect even hurtful speech on public issues to ensure that we do not stifle public debate."

When a lawsuit over these protests turns into a Supreme Court case about free speech, what is the driver?

More Language Landmarks

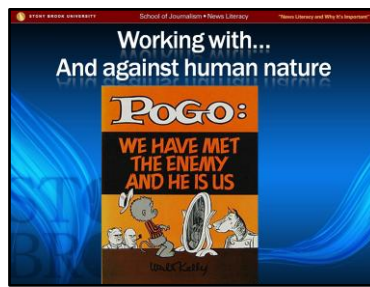
- “Right-to-Life” vs. “Anti-Abortion”
- “Pro-Choice” vs. “Pro-Abortion”
- “Ruthless” vs. “Tough”
- “Admitted” vs. “Said”
- “Islamic Community Center” vs. “Ground Zero Mosque”

In the Opinion lecture, we suggested you pay attention to language that tells you when you're in the opinion neighborhood. ASK: In these pairings, how might a news organization's choice of these words demonstrate neutrality or bias, particularly in a news report (as opposed to Opinion Journalism.)

ASK: Who will react most strongly to one or the other term?

Why is that?

What does that suggest about bias?



(LECTURER. THIS IS THE LECTURE'S HINGE, MOVING INTO COGNITIVE DISSONANCE)

If different people see different bias in words or story selection, then perhaps a major factor at work in the perception of bias is the news consumers Own Bias.

Write that idea down, it's a key concept in this course...Own Bias.(Point to chest)

As a news consumer, If you're not thoughtful about your own biases, multiple studies show you can end up dismissing reliable information or not even being able to take it in.

Do that often enough, and you'll make poor decisions, take ill-advised actions and judge unwisely. You'll see the world in a one-sided way that warps the complicated nature of truth.

If, for example, you believe in animal rights and yet you also love Chicken McNuggets, you may have to force yourself to sit through a documentary film on the conditions at large-scale chicken farms. Chances are your first reaction will be that the film-makers skewed the information or that chicken farms aren't as bad as they look. In the pursuit of reliable information, there are times when we are our own worst enemy.



THROBBING BRAIN ANIMATION...NEWS FELLOW: LINK (INSERT) VIDEO TO THIS SLIDE AND SELECT "START AUTOMATICALLY", **ALSO, SELECT "LOOP UNTIL STOPPED."**

Several times this semester, we have made reference to the value of understanding your own biases and how they affect your search for reliable information.

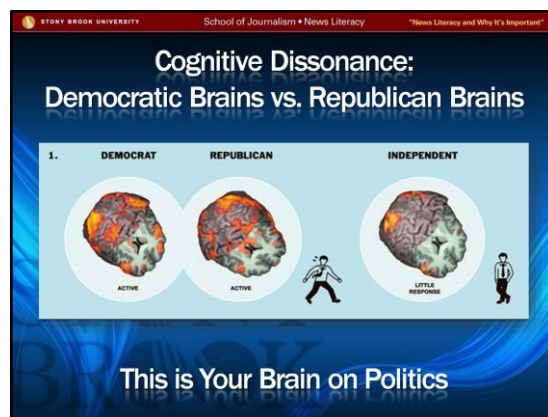
One of the most influential and widely studied areas of social psychology measures how humans react to the uncomfortable feeling caused by holding two contradictory ideas simultaneously, such as empathy for chickens and a hunger for Chicken McNuggets.

The theory of **cognitive dissonance** proposes that people are powerfully motivated to reduce that discomfort.

In order to get rid of the feeling, people will change their beliefs and behaviors, **OR** they'll justify and rationalize or even block and warp new information."

Like this: PETA is just exaggerating. Those Chickens are treated nicely. I could see them smiling" ...or..."chickens are dumb. They're not really animals...they'd die anyway, so I may as well eat them."

We will, it turns out, do almost anything to escape that feeling of cognitive dissonance.



Neuroscientists at UCLA, with a team of related experts, use functional magnetic resonance imaging to watch the brains of voters as they respond to the leading presidential candidates. When confronted with information that contradicted their belief system, strong partisans for Democratic Presidential nominee John Kerry and Republican George Bush shut down any critical thinking activity in the brain—instead, monitors found that only emotional centers of the brain showed activity.

Don't confuse anger and thinking. They aren't the same.

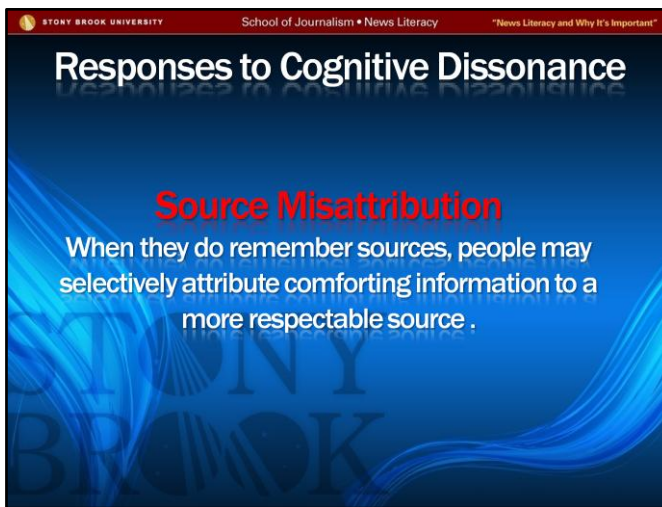
This is just one study. But there is a growing body of evidence that your biases can get in the way of clear thinking or even clear perception.



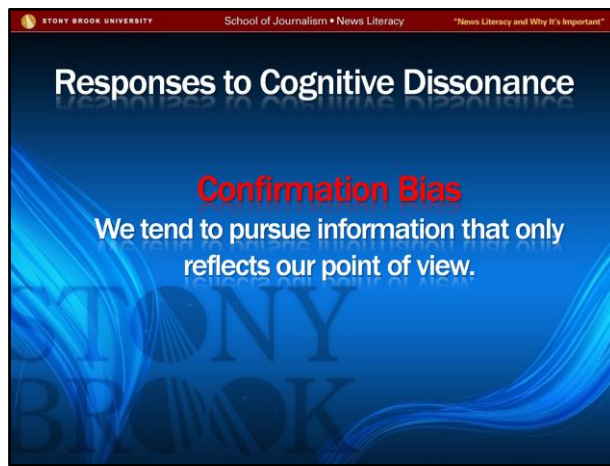
Animation: Click to bring up the phenomenon

Here are some of the more interesting...or scary...findings.

1. To reduce cognitive dissonance, we tend to distort or shut out information that conflicts with what we already believe. In this way we either warp it to reinforce our beliefs or completely shut it out.
2. To avoid cognitive dissonance, we tend to pursue information that only reflects our point of view. This is called "confirmation bias" and almost all of us know at least one person who effectively brainwashes themselves, gorging on information that only tells them what they want to hear.



Animation: Click to bring up the phenomenon **Source Misattribution**: people disassociate messages from sources. When they do remember sources, people selectively describe messages as coming from sources who are known to be more reliable. So, on a late-night call-in show, you hear something that confirms your beliefs and within three days you’re telling people you heard a Nobel Prize winner say it on CNN. If you haven’t already learned this in Psych, you should know that perception and memory are easily influenced. We are not digital recorders.



Animation: Click to bring up the phenomenon
We prefer information that **confirms** our preconceptions, regardless of whether the information is true. We gather and recall information selectively and interpret it to suit our beliefs. So, when reading about some emotional issue like abortion or gun control or gay marriage, we go to sources that tend to confirm us. We interpret ambiguous evidence as supportive. Why? It pains us to admit we're wrong. But if we persist, confirmation bias can lead us into junk. It gives us overconfidence and the habit of shouting down dissent. You could argue confirmation bias is at the heart of disastrous business, military and social decisions.

Plous, Scott (1993), *The Psychology of Judgment and Decision Making*,



Animation: Click to bring up the phenomenon **Peer Influence on Perception:** In the 1950s, Solomon Asch at Swarthmore College began testing people's need to conform by testing if an individual's perceptions could stand up to a group's erroneous judgment of rope lengths. Trivial, but a vocal majority making an obvious mistake can convince others in the room that long is short and short is long.



2,000 people participated in a survey in which they saw a brief headline accompanied by the logo of the news organization. They were asked to choose which story they wanted to see. They didn't know the only difference was the logo. Stanford professor Shanto Iyengar reported in 2009 that Democrats avoided Fox when it came to political news and preferred National Public Radio and CNN. And when the news focused on controversial issues such as the Iraq war and politics, "partisans are especially likely to screen out sources they consider opposed to their political views," a result confirmed by researchers in a subsequent study.

WHY ARE WE THIS WAY?

We evolved with a need to make quick decisions to survive. So, we are by default a little impatient. We are fighting out own evolutionary history in the battle to become smart news consumers!



News Bias vs. Audience Bias



The War in Lebanon, 1982

Does Being More Informed Guarantee That You Will Be a Less-Biased News Consumer?

And just being patient about chasing down more information may not be enough.

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"Hostile Media Effect"



- A belief among partisans that news reports are painting them in the worst possible light.
- People who are deeply involved in one side of an issue or another are quicker to spot and remember aspects of a news story that are negative.
- The best-informed partisans are the most likely to see bias.

The War in Lebanon, 1982

Partisans, people with clear opinions about the war in Lebanon were shown news coverage of the war. Researchers found that the more educated or knowledgeable the partisans, the more likely they were to perceive bias in news coverage and the less likely they were to be open to new information.

(From story in the Times:) *"When someone says several nice things about you and one derogatory thing, what sticks in your mind? People who are deeply invested in one side are quicker to spot and remember aspects of the news that hurt than they are to see aspects that help, said Richard Perloff, a Cleveland State University political communication researcher.*

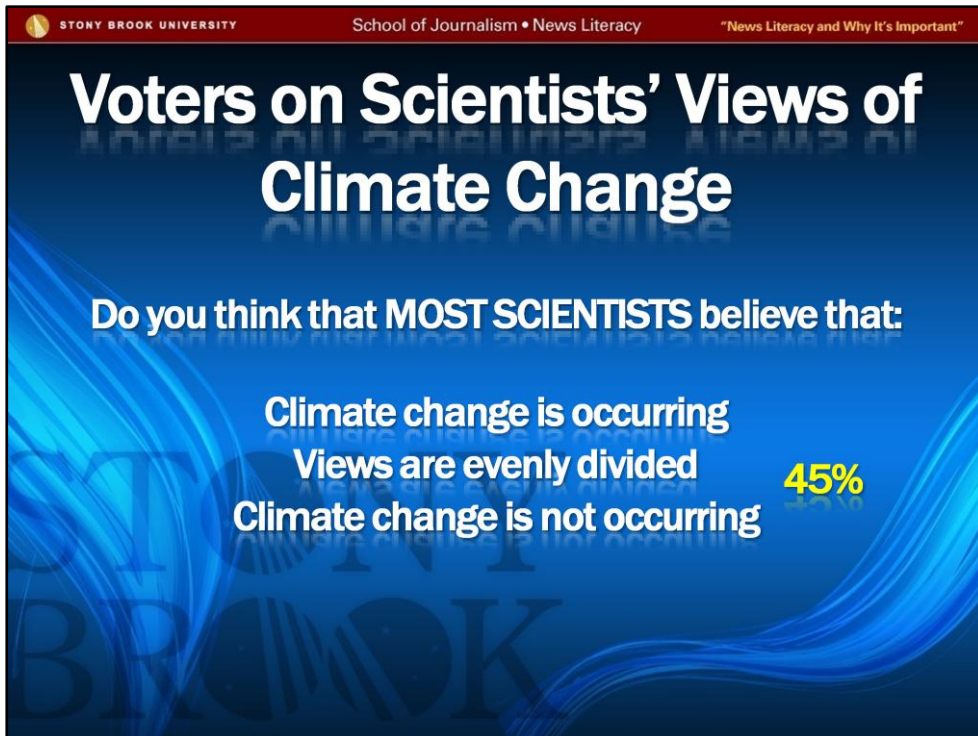
Stanford psychologist Lee D. Ross explains it like this: "When you are persuaded by something, you don't think it is propaganda". "Israelis know they see the world the way they do because they are Israelis, and Arabs, too. The difference is people think in their case, their special identities are a source of enlightenment, whereas other people's source of enlightenment is a source of bias."



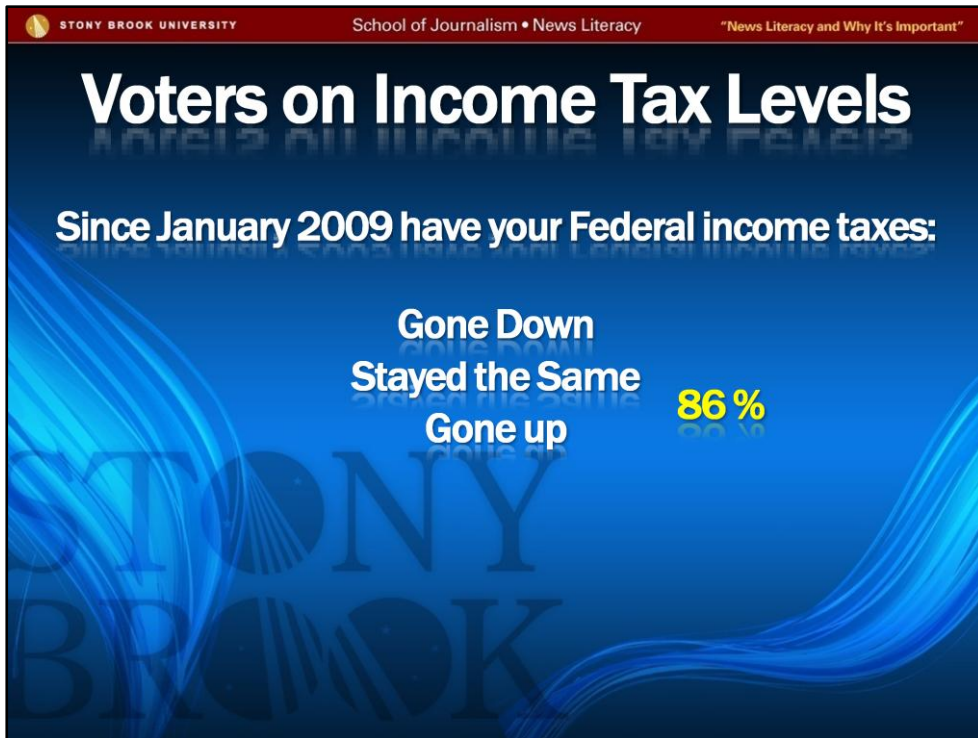
ANIMATION: CLICK BRINGS UP THE YELLOW, SHOWING WHAT VOTERS THOUGHT (Of the wrong answers, but don't say that yet)

You're an American voter...going to the polls in November of last year to pick a Congressman, a U.S. Senator or a Governor. You've been paying attention to the news. You Know What's going on. Right?

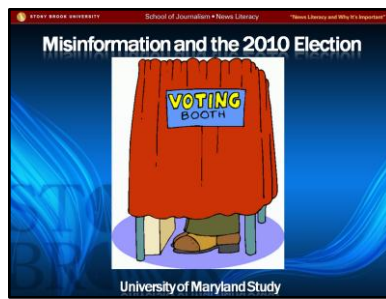
In Yellow, are the percentages of voters who chose each answer in a University of Maryland study just before the election.



ANIMATION: CLICK BRINGS UP THE YELLOW, SHOWING WHAT VOTERS THOUGHT (Of the wrong answers, but don't say that yet)



ANIMATION: CLICK BRINGS UP THE YELLOW, SHOWING WHAT VOTERS THOUGHT (Of the wrong answers, but don't say that yet)



Many American voters were flat wrong on key issues.

55% thought the economy was still nosediving in recession, when in fact the recession ended in Q3 of 2009. 86% did not know their federal taxes have gone down since 2009. 45% think climate change is not occurring or that scientists are evenly divided, when in fact the National Academy of Sciences has overwhelmingly concluded the climate is changing.

A majority believed other falsehoods: that Obama initiated the bank bailout and that foreign donors financed the U.S. Chamber of Commerce's 2010 election crusade to elect Republicans.

Those who were most misinformed? Viewers of Fox News and MSNBC...the two most partisan news outlets.

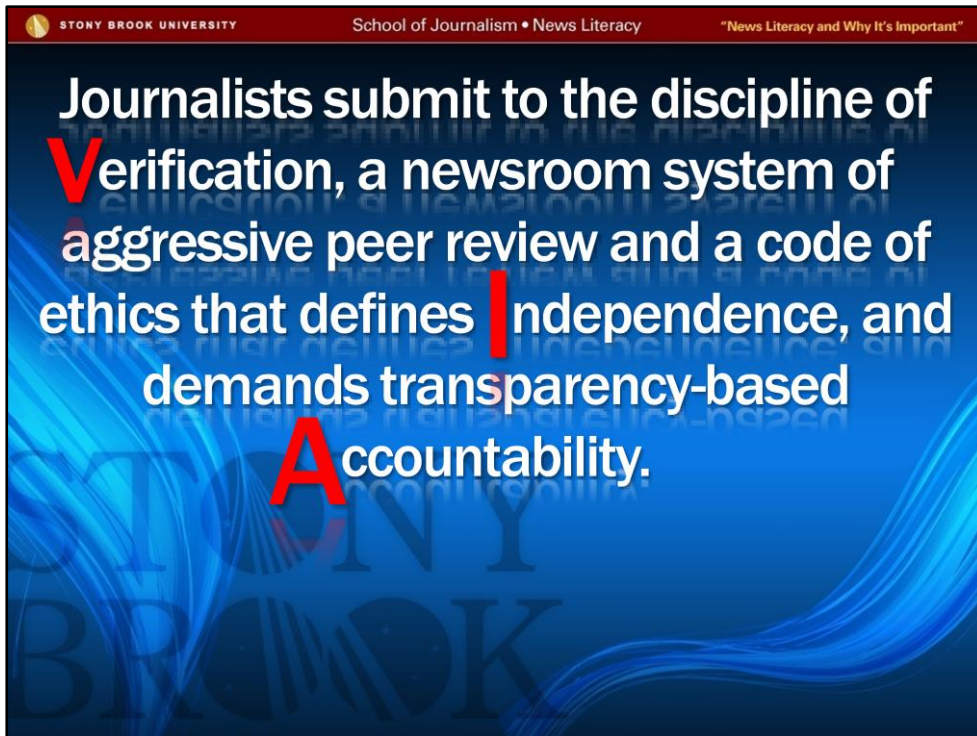
Before you blame media bias, here's a big question:
Are Fox and MSNBC putting out false information?
OR...are Fox and MSNBC viewers unable to untangle their ears, eyes and memories from their reactions to cognitive dissonance?



Animation: First click is one person in a news meeting. Second click brings up the rest of the group of editors

You have heard some teachers in this course deride “objectivity” as a jejeune idea, saying anyone who tells you they can be objective is an intellectual child or a liar.

Journalists understand this (2ND CLICK) which is why they submit to the discipline of verification and embrace a process by which a team challenges and shapes the final report. In that way, the hope is that individual biases can be whittled and sanded off a story.



In this process, reporters are transparent about their reporting, disclosing how they know what they know and disclosing any conflicts of interest that might bring shame upon the organization.

So the idea of Objectivity? What journalists are referring to is not individual objectivity but this aspiration newsrooms have to guard their neutrality.

It's worth noting that in professional circles, journalists who flout this culture of neutrality quickly become pariahs.

CLICK NOW FOR CRAZY V.I.A. ANIMATION

STONY BROOK UNIVERSITY School of Journalism • News Literacy "News Literacy and Why It's Important"

Three Questions Today:

- How do we know if a news article is fair?
- How do we know if a news outlet is biased?
- What's the difference between news media bias and audience bias?

This brings us full circle back to the Three Questions we started with.

Now, we're going to ask you to go looking for news media bias and Own Bias (point to self again).



POINT: IN SUMMARY...

- *Recognize Your possible bias
- *Test Your assumptions against the evidence and a set of criteria.
- *Go outside your comfort zone.
- *As we said in Opinion...stay open to information that challenges your previously held beliefs and assumptions. *Prompt: Why is this important in a effort to get reliable information?*



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Today's Key Lessons of News Literacy:

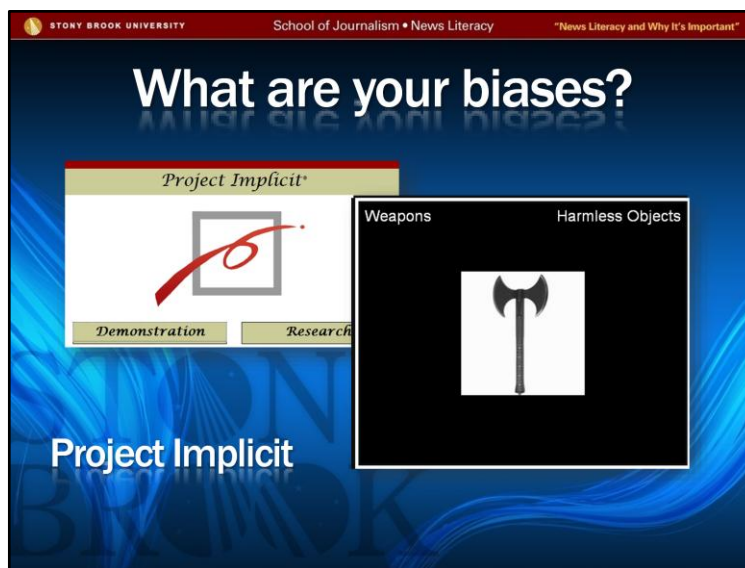
- Don't judge the news media on the basis of one news outlet or story. Don't judge one outlet on the basis of one mistake. Look for patterns.
- Stay Open to Information That Challenges Your Previously-Held Beliefs and Assumptions

-

Previous key lessons...

- Know what neighborhood you're in
- In the News Neighborhood, differentiate News from Opinion

This is a big day. We learn two of the key lessons of News Literacy.



(ANIMATION: Images fade in. Project Implicit screen grab changes once automatically.)

First, we're sending you to the Project Implicit website to measure if you have absorbed automatic word associations that might reflect societal bias or even your own biases. It's a kind of video game that pushes you to match words and by measuring your delays, it attempts to sort out how you feel about certain people or ideas. You have a lot of options to test: race, gender, politics, age, size, religion. Pick a subject that interests you and keep track of what you learn. Point of this isn't that it's a perfect measure of your implicit biases.

You're doing a light version of the experiment. Our point is that this gets you thinking about how your own biases might affect your ability to absorb information.

STONY BROOK UNIVERSITY School of Journalism • News Literacy "News Literacy and Why It's Important"

Balance, Fairness and Bias



Is this what college women really do on Spring Break?

(Lecturers. This slide is the subject of considerable debate. It's a little offensive, which is why it perfectly illustrates the prejudice (fantasy) that caused newspaper editors to run really poor stories about the AMA study of college women's behaviors on spring break. We offer two more options, but you may wish to go a little tamer. Either way, don't spill the beans about the mistakes that were made in coverage of the Spring Break study. Leave those for the next class.)

According to an AMA study, alcohol and sex play a prominent and potentially dangerous role in the spring break trips of college women.

In recitation, you'll read the coverage of that study and look for evidence of media bias.

Balance, Fairness and Bias



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Assignments

7. Student assignments for the week of 3/14 to 3/18

Build Content Create Assessment Add Interactive Tool Assign Textbook

- Spring Break Readings**
Deadline: Must complete all Spring Break readings **prior to recitation this week**. You will be quizzed on this material.
Students, read articles in this order: 1. AMA Press Release, 2. Boston Herald article, 3. Howard Kurtz article from the Washington Post.
- Project Implicit Folder**
Deadline: Homework must be uploaded **prior to recitation this week**.
Inside this folder you will find an assignment and a SafeAssignment link where you must upload your work.
- Optional Reading- Satire from The Onion**
- After recitation, complete the assignments in this folder.**
The readings in the this folder must be completed prior to Lecture 8.

Students should read Blackboard carefully.
The Spring Break and Project Implicit Homework are to be done PRIOR to recitation.

STONY BROOK UNIVERSITY School of Journalism • News Literacy "News Literacy and Why It's Important"

Assignments

After recitation, complete the assignments in this folder. ▾

Build Content ▾ Create Assessment ▾ Add Interactive Tool ▾ Assign Textbook ▾

Read Chapter 2 in "The Elements of Journalism" ▾

Readings: Open the Freezer Folder ▾

The “Elements of Journalism” reading and the “Open the Freezer” folder are for AFTER recitation.
Warning: Horrible animations