

JRN 101B/ 103G: News Literacy

Recitation: Balance, Fairness and Bias

I. Organization

- A. Attendance
- B. News Quiz
- C. Give back and review **Test #1**

II. RECAP the “Balance, Fairness and Bias” Lecture

- A. Reviewing the terms and their significance
 - What do we mean by balance in journalism? Give examples.
 - What do we mean by fairness? Where does judgment come in?
 - What do we mean by bias?

III. Discuss the bias test on **Project Implicit**.

- PREEMPT (AGAIN) THEIR COMPLAINTS ABOUT HOW UNFAIR THE TEST IS – MECHANICAL PROBLEMS OR WHATEVER. EXPLAIN THAT THE TEST WAS DESIGNED TO TAKE ACCOUNT OF THOSE PROBLEMS. TRY TO PROMPT AS MUCH OF AN HONEST DISCUSSION AS POSSIBLE.
- How did they do? What did they learn from it?

IV. The Spring Break Story

- In the context of bias and fairness, discuss both the press release and the story, which students were supposed to bring to class. Ask for students’ reactions to the study and the stories written on it. Does the information seem reliable? Why or why not?
- Why did the news media get it wrong?
 - ✓ We want to believe it; fits into disposition...cognitive dissonance. The story surrounding the spring break story illustrates the pitfalls of *confirmation bias*. We tend to believe stories that fit our preconceived notions of what is true.
 - ✓ Internet polling is self-selected. Surveys must be random to be valid.
 - ✓ AMA seems like a good source

- ✓ The AMA posting note was late to announce the margin of error was too small.
- ✓ Only 27 % of the 644 surveyed *were actually on spring break*. Invalid sample.

V. Assignments

1. “Elements of Journalism” Chapter 1: Truth: the First and Most Confusing Principle.”
2. “Elements of Journalism” Chapter 4: “Journalism of Verification”
3. Katrina stories (May change. Watch Blackboard Homework Folder)
4. Remind students that the Shattered Glass assignment will be due week of the 25th. Their viewing options: DVDs on reserve in the library; watching at home; going to one of the scheduled screenings. They are to write about the verification process as depicted in the movie. See Blackboard for more details.