

Discussions of Journalism and Politics

- Understanding the News -

Classroom: HSS 201

Student Facilitator: Hector

Pineda

Time: Mondays 7:10 - 8:30 pm

Email:

hpineda@mail.sfsu.edu

Faculty Facilitator: Kathy Emery

Phone: (818) 257-0702

Course Description:

By being mindful of our beliefs and the beliefs of others, we fortify our critical thinking, our common sense, and our general open mindedness. As a result, periodically reading, listening, or watching news sources, serves as a medium through which people can observe some details regarding the lives and events of others' around the world. Thus, the news amplifies actions and events in distant nations granting us- the readers, watchers, or listeners, the opportunity to thoughtfully analyze specific actions and events. This is especially useful when attempting to comprehend the ever convoluted field of politics and international relations, which has otherwise served as a source of confusion and grief to many. Consequently, being mindful of the news can lead to new breakthroughs ranging from discoveries of empathy to a general understanding of government.

Purpose:

If this course is successful, students, including the facilitator, will be able to thoroughly and methodically analyze the news, politics, people, and their own selves. Students will leave the course with the ability to recognize biases in journalism and the ability to act as independent and critical thinkers. In turn, students will no longer feel as idle observers but as investigative watchdogs of society.

Required Material:

- Notepad
- Pen, Pencil, Writing Utensil.
- If personally desired, Laptop or any other electronic note keeping device.
- Journal or anything that can hold paper together
- Open Minds
- The ability to interact with fellow humans

Texts:

All reading or interactive material will be discussed in class and emailed prior to the forthcoming classes. Reading and Interactive Material may include, but is not limited to, the following:

- Outfoxed: Rupert Murdoch's War on Journalism
- *Indignez-vous!* By Stéphane Hessel
- New York Times

- NPR
- The Daily Beast
- Newstrust.net
- Ethos (2011)

Class Participation:

Class participation will consist of a weekly journal entry which, at the author's permission, will be discussed among class participants. Participation credit will be heavily based on a student's ability to express their opinions thoroughly and concisely in class. Prepare for debate and discourse for every class. Argue to discover, not to triumph. Be prepared to rely on and be relied on your classmates.

Class Attendance:

Students are expected to attend at least 10 out of the 15(~ 66%) classes throughout the semester if course credit is desired. Absences may be excused upon emailing the student facilitator. Being a discourse heavy class it is crucial for students to have some sort of input in the majority of the classes. Please, do not attend class if you feel like you may infect classmates with your disease and/or virus.

Accommodations:

Students with disabilities who need particular classroom accommodations please inform your facilitator and accommodations will be made as suited.

Grading:

- 40%: Class Participation
- 20%: Weekly Journal
- 10%: In Class Presentation
- 20%: Attendance
- 10%: Final

Democratic Education:

Due to the strong emphasis on student-guided learning, subject/discussion content or themes of class meetings may change based on what the class would like to learn, practice, and explore.

Any weekly subject can be changed or modified depending on how the class takes shape.

(Johnson, 2012)

Course Schedule:

Subject to change, several times. Email facilitator for further information regarding the following.

(Week 1)

Introduction to the course.

(Optional) Getting to know each other. Regardless of the size of the class, I feel that it is important to use the first day as the day of breaking each other's shells. Understandably, this could take a huge chunk out of class which is completely fine so long as the class becomes slightly more comfortable with each other

(Week 2)

Widespread news sources and mediums. The variety of news sources that exist across the world and how they affect, or don't affect, our daily lives.

(Week 3)

What the News is.

Newstrust.net.

Weekly Journal

(Week 4)

What the news isn't, or should be.

How non-news can integrate itself with news.

(Week 5)

The facts, the subjects or the Who, What, Where, How, and Why. Although most of us do not read the news line to line, as long as these key aspects are identified, one can make a carefully thought out judgments of the information presented.

(Week 6)

The Daily Show, the O'Reily Factor, and the Rachel Maddow Show

(Week 7)

Presentation of how the News has (or hasn't) affected a student or group of students in a certain manner.

"If you want to change people's ideas, you shouldn't try to convince them intellectually. What you need to do is get them into a situation where they'll have to act on ideas, not argue about them. (Horton, M., Kohl, J., & Kohl, H. R. 1990)"

Brainstorming potential ideas.

(Week 8)

Journalism working for and working against a cause, person, or political agenda. We will explore how News reports can be subjective and why they would want to be subjective.

Film: Outfoxed

(Week 9)

Also, we will explore how the News can at times blur the line and be both full of facts yet still subjective.

Film TBA

(Week 10)

Confirmation bias, ignoring outside views or arguments contrary to your own.

The internet... harmful or beneficial to politics and journalism?

(Week 11)

Guest Speaker TBA

(Weeks 12)

Problem solving skills.

Come up with your own ways of honing in one's focus on a subject and analyzing it properly.

Vipassana
(Week 13)
Presentations !
(Week 14) FINAL