

Topic: Gutenberg's and Zuckerberg's revolutions

(1a) Compare the ways in which the Internet and Gutenberg's printing press changed the world. Illustrate your answer using three specific and distinct examples from reading assignments, recent news reports, lecture or guest speakers. (10 pts)

- a.
- b.
- c.

Johannes Gutenberg's invention of the mechanical printing press with moveable type and the Internet have both allowed information to move faster, democratized knowledge (where many more people can publish, with more choices for what information is available), AND set the stage for challenges to existing authority (by empowering individuals to educate themselves through new access to information and more efficient and powerful ways to spread information through publishing and sharing).

(1b) After Gutenberg's invention, literacy in Europe soared, a new middle class emerged and the rapid spread of new ideas in books challenged the authority of the Catholic Church and monarchies across Europe. Compare the impact of the internet on modern society. Illustrate your answer using three specific and distinct examples from either your reading assignments, recent news reports, lecture or guest speakers. (10 pts)

- a.
- b.
- c.

Answers need to demonstrate understanding, such as...

Authority challenged: Most recently Facebook in Egypt and other Mideast countries, Twitter in Iran, bloggers in China, media watchdogs in America, riots in England

More books = millions of blogs, websites, etc

Boom in literacy = boom in publishers. More people have learned the tools of publication.

Self-education of middle class = Wikis, distance learning.

World shrinks = world shrinks even more with creative partnerships around the globe.

(1c) We have discussed the historic changes brought about by Johannes Gutenberg's invention of the mechanical printing press, which allowed information to spread faster among an increasingly literate population, setting the stage for challenges to existing authority. Cite three specific examples from recent news events that illustrate the impact of changes brought about by our current information revolution on the internet.

- a.
- b.
- c.

Student may get credit for citing:

Accelerated spread of information times three: Facebook postings from scene of rebellions in Egypt, Tunisia, Libya. (Need to give details from each rebellion)

Besides the accelerated spread of information, groups form quickly on Facebook, and can be quantified. We are able to see how many people “like” something. Public opinion, outcry and solidarity goes live. Also, there is Facebook activism. Student must cite specific groups doing specific work on an issue or candidacy.

World shrinks= Middle East protesters gain global support from Facebookers

More books = Not a great answer, but there are obscure corners of Facebook where people provide educational material. Student must cite specifics, though.

Boom in literacy = Remember, literacy is defined not only as consuming information, but also creating it and Facebook has certainly allowed more people to have the tools of publication.

Topic: News media - definition and purpose

(2a) At a campaign rally, you hear the wife of a prominent U.S. senator describe her book about “the kinds of violent and explicit messages our children are receiving through the media and what we as parents can do about it.” She introduces her husband, who gives a campaign speech in which he makes several jokes at the expense of “the media,” and points to the small pack of reporters at the edge of the stage who are covering the speech for various websites, TV stations and newspapers. Why has the senator misused the phrase “the media,” while his wife has spoken correctly? Why might it matter to voters? (10 pts)

The media refers to the universe of entertainment and information created and distributed in any format. In contrast, the news media refers to a subset of the media that delivers news. Examples need to be directly on-point. News Media is characterized by verification, independence and accountability while Media is any information created and shared by anyone using any method. It matters because a U.S. Senator makes policy and needs to understand the difference between restricting promotional/advertising/entertainment/propaganda (media) and restricting citizens’ freedom of the press (news media). Voters might be wary of a politician who doesn’t understand the role of the press.

(2b) A blizzard is on its way to the region and you turn on the TV to get a forecast. First, you see a story about school closings. Next, you see a story about Charlie Sheen’s latest antics. Last you see a story about a 9/11 memorial sculpture and how various New Yorkers feel ten years later. We have asserted in this course that humans are social animals who actively seek out news and information because it fulfills these three needs. What are those three needs and how do they apply to the news stories you just saw on TV? (10 pts)

- a.
- b.
- c.

In order: Alerts, Diverts, Connects

(2c) What two things are wrong with the following statement? Explain. “I wish The Media in this country would realize what news serves. It seems like a every news story is meant to entertain and alert us, but there are no stories that protect us.”

The person is obviously speaking about news media, not “the media.” The third need is not to “protect,” but to “connect.”

Topic: Power of information

(3a) In News Literacy you learned that governments are at times in conflict with the press. Napoleon made the remark: “Four hostile newspapers are more to be feared than a thousand bayonets.” What core concept from the course does this remark illustrate? Provide an example from your course materials of how one modern government seems to agree with Napoleon. (10 pts)

In Egypt, the government blocked Internet service to try to immobilize protestors. In Libya, Western reporters were blocked from entering the country. After the presidential election in Iran, protesters took to the streets and the government took to the Web, closing off information flow in and out of the country and rounding up reporters whose dispatches did not paint a flattering picture. Other examples could include North Korea detaining two U.S. freelancers, China suppressing information about disasters there. From lecture, we also have Mexico, Russia, Cuba. Tons of examples. We must add Syria to the list.

(3b) Reflect on the kidnapping or death of a journalist you read about or heard about during lecture. Cite specific examples from the course and use actual names, places, etc. to also discuss why journalists are under attack in many parts of the world. (10 pts)

Most recently, Anderson Cooper and Lara Logan were attacked in Egypt. My Life As guest speaker Iason Athanasiadis was detained in Iran. The reporter who wrote his own obituary.

Danny Pearl’s kidnapping and execution shocked me. I didn’t know before I read the CPJ website that governments, political parties and criminals around the world often target the press in an effort to prevent the release of embarrassing information and in an effort to intimidate the populace. This illustrates the power of information.

Other Examples can include Moises Saman detained by Iraqi forces and any other named journalist cited on the CPJ site.

(3c) Although China has embraced technology and freed up business to compete globally, censorship is still the norm for Chinese Internet users. Using examples from the course, describe the kind of material that is censored in China, what actions are taken to censor information and speculate on why the Chinese government bars a free press. (10 pts)

- a.
- b.
- c.

Censorship appears to be the norm in China, although in one of our reading assignments, New York Times Reporter Nick Kristof describes how hit-and-miss it is: he posted statements he thought would be censored and they were left online, while other statements were quickly removed.

Perhaps the best example is information about the Tianenmen Square massacre, in which pro-democracy protesters were killed by the Army. Only in recent years has the information been available to curious Chinese, and even then, in a sanitized version.

If China’s leaders did not fear an informed populace, they would publish full details. But their decision to remove details demonstrates they are not confident the government could survive the exposure. Other censorship examples can include information on Tibet, on the pro-democracy movement, Falun Gong, etc.

Topic: Know your neighborhood foundations

(4a) The habit of a smart news consumer is to “Know Your Neighborhood.” Explain what this phrase means and why it is so important. What three characteristics should you look for in any information you receive that will let you know whether it is journalism or something else? (10 pts) Explain:

- a.
- b.
- c.

News consumers in a digital world see a lot of the lines between news and other information blurring. Not all information is of equal value, which means consumers can be confused or deceived if they don't pay attention. News is characterized by verification, independence and accountability. Students need to accurately use the Grid characteristics to distinguish the other types of information they cite.

(4b) In lecture you viewed a video report on what electronic games to buy children for the holidays and for homework you viewed a YouTube video produced by www.MNF.Iraq that portrayed street warfare in Iraq. Both cases illustrate how a key characteristics of journalism can be compromised. It is possible that the same characteristic was compromised. For each case, what characteristic was compromised and explain how it was compromised. (10 pts)

- a.
- b.

Independence.

The woman touting certain games and slamming others was presented as an expert, which she is, but she was on the marketing payroll of the makers of games she extolled.

MNF.Iraq is the web presence of the U.S. and other military powers fighting the Iraqi insurgency. The site specifically says they will not going to show anything but uplifting or heroic actions by MNF soldiers.

(A student could arguably get credit for citing Verification or Accountability, but they'd have to do a credible job of demonstrating its applicability to both stories.)

(4c) A student claims, “If I see something broadcast that is interesting and informative, then I believe it is news.” Is this student correct? Explain using at least two different core course concepts.(10 pts)

- a.
- b.

The student is not correct.

Students may apply the formal course definition: “News is information of some public interest that is shared and subject to the journalistic process of verification.” and point out that ads, entertainment, raw information and propaganda can all be interesting and informative, without any evidence of verification.

Students may, alternatively, apply the Verification, Independence, Accountability tests and demonstrate they understand it isn't journalism until it has been verified and unless it has been distributed by an independent entity that is accountable for the trustworthiness of the information.

Topic: Neighborhood case studies

(5a) You're in the market for an iPad 2 and you want to learn more about the product before you buy one. You visit the Apple.com website and you read this:

Thinner, lighter, and full of great ideas.

Once you pick up iPad 2, it'll be hard to put down. That's the idea behind the all-new design. It's 33 percent thinner and up to 15 percent lighter, so it feels even more comfortable in your hands.² And it makes surfing the web, checking email, watching movies, and reading books so natural, you might forget there's incredible technology under your fingers.

What information neighborhood are you in? If you are in the news neighborhood, explain why. If you are in another neighborhood, describe why it is not news. (10 pts)

You are in the advertising or promotion neighborhood. Apple is going to tout its own product. Answer should include that this piece of information does not come from an independent source and focuses only on the positive attributes.

(5b) You sign up to receive emails from President Obama's political organization. The organization sends you and all the members of the organization, as well as all major news outlets, an email announcing a new proposal to secure more money from Congress for student loans. He asks for your support and urges you to contact your congressman. Which information neighborhood are you in? Explain your answer, using course concepts. (10 pts)

Students can earn full credit for a number of approaches.

This is "publicity" in a classic form: the press release. The student needs to correctly define publicity as the attempt to enhance the image of a product (the reform measure) by using only positive information and a healthy dose of spin. Though we should also note that press releases are traditionally not sent directly to people's email boxes! They are released to the press. If considered newsworthy, the press will often use them to write a story. Though, people often put themselves on lists and receive press releases. I'm going to alter the question to include this.

It is, however, propagandistic in the broadest sense, in that it is produced by the government and intended to persuade. A student who cites all the elements of propaganda from the grid can earn full credit if they note that it's the unusual form of positive propaganda as opposed to demonizing propaganda, since the primary intent is to persuade and...it's a government information campaign. I don't consider this type of propaganda so unusual, but I also don't think deceptiveness is an essential characteristic of propaganda.

(5c) Walt Disney World has issued a statement to the press and anyone visiting their website denying allegations from theme park workers that they are underpaid and "abused" by having to wear unventilated, heavy costumes during hot weather. In the statement Disney spokesperson

Ellen Walters said: “The allegations are completely unfounded.” Are you getting information from the news neighborhood? Explain why. If you are in another neighborhood, explain why. (10 pts)

This is classic publicity. The spin is delivered in a company statement that is intended to enhance the image of a corporate client, or at least to protect that image. It only addresses one side. Not independent. No verification.

(5d) From the list below, what information neighborhood might you be in when you’re on YouTube? Explain your answer, using examples from the course to illustrate you understand the differences between neighborhoods. (10 pts)

- a. News
- b. Advertising
- c. Entertainment
- d. Raw Information
- e. All of the above

The correct answer is e and the student must explain that YouTube is, like a printing press, merely a medium by which information of all kinds can be delivered.

Topic: First Amendment conceptual foundation

(6a) Define the term “no prior restraint.” How does it relate to freedom of the press? (10 pts)

“No prior restraint” means that the government cannot prevent publication or broadcast of news or other information. There are two exceptions: National Security and Pornography. This doctrine, first articulated in the case of *Near v. Minnesota* (1931), was the first real amplification of what the Founders meant by freedom of the press in the First Amendment. It gives the U.S. press considerable leeway in what it can publish. But the news media is still subject to libel and defamation lawsuits after publication – and government secrecy and privacy laws place restrictions on what it can gather.

(6b-i) The First Amendment guarantees freedom of the press. Does this mean the press cannot be punished no matter what it prints? Explain why or why not.

The First Amendment has broad protection for publishers, but that does not mean they are not accountable for what they publish. Publishers can be sued and punished for libel, and held legally liable for certain criminal and civil infractions (such as copyright, etc.)

(6b-ii) Describe freedom of the press as defined by the First Amendment and interpreted by the U.S. Supreme Court. (10 pts)

The Bill of Rights does not define Freedom of the Press. In a series of cases, the courts have ruled that the press is free to print whatever it wishes, but must take the consequences after publication, such as libel or defamation lawsuits. The court has only defined two exceptions to no prior restraint: Publication of information that would pose a serious threat to national security or information defined as “obscene” by community standards could be blocked.

Comment [1]:

(6c) Why did the framers of the U.S. Constitution name the press as one of the five First Amendment freedoms? Give two specific examples from the course of stories that demonstrates the role the press was intended to play? (10 pts)

- a.
- b.

The framers believed that a free press was a necessary check on the power of the government. They believed that a debate of public issues should be fulsome and open. The framers intended to protect the people, NOT the press. The framers gave the press the role of watchdog to check against corruption in the government. Some examples: exposing the abuse at Abu Ghraib prison, reporting on SWIFT, Walter Reed, Pentagon Papers.

(6d) Name the five freedoms protected under the First Amendment. Carefully explain who the founders intended to protect with the First Amendment and why. (10 pts)

Religion, Speech, Press, Peaceable Assembly, Petition for redress of wrongs. The First Amendment was intended to protect individual's liberty against government authority. The clause about press was interpreted to mean individuals were protected from any excesses of elected officials and the government.

(6e) Define the term "watchdog journalism" and provide two examples. (10 pts)

- a.
- b.

Watchdog journalism means that the news media should act as a guardian of the public interest by holding individuals and institutions accountable for their impact on political and social life. The framers protected freedom of the press in hopes that government's three branches would be challenged by a watchful public and press, writing whatever they wished about government decisions and government leaders. (It is my understanding that the framers of the Constitution never used this term, so we should avoid the anachronism ourselves.)

Topic: First Amendment cases

(7a) A newspaper website wants to publish a list of everyone on Long Island who has been granted a permit for a handgun. Some handgun owners object that owning a handgun is their own business and their privacy should not be violated. Also, owning a gun is a right guaranteed by the Second Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. Can the courts stop the newspaper from publishing the list? Why or why not? (10 pts)

Publication cannot be blocked. Although gun owners argue it's a violation of their privacy, the only grounds on which the Supreme Court has allowed Prior Restraint of publication of information are...national security and obscenity. There is, students should know, NO constitutional right to privacy.

(7b) A news website has obtained and verified a confidential report from U.S. Marine Gen. John Allen to the President in which he says our central command center in Kabul is vulnerable to

flooding if someone simply rolls a grenade down the storm water drain outside the northeast gate. A reporter calls the Pentagon for comment and a top general objects, saying he'll go to court to prevent publication. What First Amendment conflict is illustrated by this case? Can the courts stop the website from publishing the memo? Why or why not? (10 pts)

It's impossible, without a precedent, to say if a court ruling against publication would be upheld, so students should be granted some leeway in this answer, although strictly speaking the bar is set very high: "Imminent threat to the lives of troops," being the last answer given by the Supreme Court.

But their answer should identify correctly that the Pentagon's argument would be that this is a threat to national security and to the lives of troops on the ground and therefore publication could be blocked under the National Security exception to the No Prior Restraint rule.

Students will have hit a home run if they cite the Pentagon Papers as an example or (better yet) the recent Bob Woodward story about the Afghanistan recommendations held by the Post.

(7c) A TV station has obtained university files that prove a Stony Brook administrator who is on trial for embezzling was caught stealing from his fraternity's checking account 20 years ago. When the station calls for comment, the defendant's lawyer runs to court to prevent the story from airing, saying it will poison jurors against his client. The lawyer cites the Sixth Amendment's right to a trial by an impartial jury. Can the courts stop the TV station from airing its report? Why or why not? (10 pts)

It's a clash with the defendant's right to a fair trial before an impartial jury.

The court cannot stop the TV station from airing the story because neither the National Security nor Obscenity exceptions to No Prior Restraint applies to this case.

Students who go further to say the courts can change venue or sequester jurors or tune up their voir dire...should get extra points!

Topic: News drivers

(8a) Four young men are accused by a Hofstra freshman of raping her in a dorm bathroom. They are arrested, but three days later, she recants her accusation when prosecutors find a cell-phone video of the event that clearly shows her as a willing participant. List three news drivers that made this a front-page story and explain how each one relates to the story. (10 pts)

a.

b.

c.

Conflict: Rights of the accused and the accuser are in conflict

Proximity (virtual proximity of college students to each other)

Unusualness: This is not the typical date rape, rape or college sex story.

(8b) Explain what factors might drive an undergraduate living in the dorms at Stony Brook to be interested in news about scientists at Brookhaven National Laboratory successfully accelerating gold nuclei to nearly the speed of light and colliding them to study the conditions of the universe in the first microsecond after the Big Bang. (10 pts)

(alternate wording):

Explain why an undergraduate living in the dorms at Stony Brook would be interested in news about scientists at Brookhaven National Laboratory successfully accelerating gold atoms to nearly the speed of light and colliding them to recreate the conditions of the universe in the first microsecond after the Big Bang. What are the news drivers for this story and why do they apply in this situation?

The correct answer should incorporate news drivers and/or the Three Genetic Needs for News...The need for news that Alerts (to new knowledge) is the right first step. And as to drivers, credit can be given for a cogent and accurate application of several drivers, although the most accurate answers are progress, proximity and magnitude.

(8c) Gov. Andrew Cuomo has announced a partial restoration of funds which had been cut from the state budget, which heavily affected the SUNY system. List three news drivers that make this a front-page story in the campus newspaper and explain why. (10 pts)

a.

b.

c.

Proximity

Importance

Conflict

Change

Other drivers accepted if the student makes a really good case that demonstrates they understand the driver and have accurately applied it.

Comment [2]:

Topic: Opinion journalism

(9a) Why is understanding the difference between news and opinion journalism important for a news consumer and why is it important for a news organization? Give two examples to illustrate your answer. (10 pts)

a.

b.

Consumers seeking reliable information look for verified information from accountable, independent sources. An opinion writer is, by definition, not required to give the full story and cannot, therefore, be involved in the news gathering or news writing process, which is supposed to strive for the full range of perspectives.

News organizations must guard their independence if they are to be credible providers of reliable (verified) information. The organization is accountable to the public for breaches of professional standards that forbid partisan activity by news staff.

(9b) At our lecture, we described a metaphoric “wall” that is supposed to separate news writers and opinion writers. Why is the “wall” important to news organizations and to news consumers? Give two examples to support your answer. (10 pts)

- a.
- b.

Consumers seeking reliable information look for verified information from accountable, independent sources. An opinion writer is, by definition, not required to give the full story and cannot, therefore, be involved in the news gathering or news writing process, which is supposed to strive for the full range of perspectives.

News organizations must guard their independence if they are to be credible providers of reliable (verified) information. The organization is accountable to the public for breaches of professional standards that forbid partisan activity by news staff.

(9c) “You are entitled to your own opinions, but you are not entitled to your own facts,” said the late Senator and Ambassador Daniel Patrick Moynihan. How is that phrase useful to news consumers in distinguishing between opinion journalism and other opinionated information they encounter? Provide two examples. (10 pts)

- a.
- b.

Comment [3]:

Consumers seeking reliable information look for verified information from accountable, sources. An opinion writer is, by definition, not required to give the full story, but the facts she or he uses must be verified, verifiable and cannot be ignored or made up.

Topic: Identifying opinion journalism

(10a) Graphic marks, labels, word choice, tone and presentation techniques help consumers distinguish a news organization’s reporting from its opinion writing or commentary. Describe three examples of such language or labeling and explain how it helps you distinguish news reports from opinion journalism. (10 pts)

- a.
- b.
- c.

Possible answers: The use of "I" in the text or words and vocal tone that indicate emotion or conclusion, a photo of the writer that accompanies the column, the placement of the text within the newspaper, the label "opinion, commentary or editorial" at the top of the page, labels on the article itself (Column, Op-Ed, Editorial, Cartoon, Commentary, Special Commentary, Letters, News Analysis, Opinion.) A “chiron” or on-screen label that says “commentary” or an identifying tag on the person's name that indicates their affiliation with an organization or cause. A tag at the end of the text that explains the writer's expertise in a certain field. No traditional byline that identifies the person as a "staff writer, etc.,etc,etc

(10b) List three ways that newspapers, websites and broadcast news organizations “label” their opinion sections. Describe three examples of the type of journalism you can find there. (10 pts)(10 pts)

- a.

Comment [4]:

b.

c.

Review: A specialized critic's appraisal of creative works such as video games, movies, music, fashion, restaurants, books, performances, etc.

Column: A regularly-scheduled writer. First person, individual opinions. Typically a distinctive style of writing and worldview.

Commentary: Any format, any length, an expression of opinion.

Editorial: The institutional opinion of the paper, typically written by a group of persons appointed by the owner of the news outlet.

Op-Ed Column: An expert or participant is asked to write their opinion about a subject in the news.

Letter: A reader's opinion, expressed in about 300 words.

News Analysis: Close examination of ramifications of a story. Reported thoroughly, but also draws on experience/expertise of the reporter. Aims to help reader understand underlying causes, context, history or consequences. Does not include personal opinion of the reporter.

Reporter's Notebook (or) "Back Story": News Analysis Lite. Typically first-person observations from the scene of a news story or involving a look at how the story came together.

(10c) You click on the radio and hear a speaker in the middle of discussing a topic that greatly interests you. At first, you are not sure if the person is a regular news reporter or a commentator providing opinion. Describe at least three examples of language you should you listen for in order to determine whether you are getting news or opinion. (10pts)

a.

b.

c.

- First-person ("I")
- Emotional or loaded words (rude, incompetent, dull, brilliant, honorable, exception...and other words that call for a subjective assessment)
- Conclusory phrases (Illegal, unconstitutional, dangerous, disastrous... and other words that call for a legal or at least expert judgment)
- Directive (do not, Do...and other phrases that tell the reader what to do)
- Humor, biting sarcasm, irony, mad-cap tone