

JRN 101B/ 103G: News Literacy/ Spring 2010

Recitation 3: The Blurring of the Lines

Purpose: An in depth discussion of “what is journalism and who is a journalist?” Why is it important in a digital 24/7 media world for news consumers to know what “neighborhood” they are in? Students will learn the first rule of News Literacy: Know which neighborhood you are in.

I. Organization

- Attendance and announcements. This is a good point to emphasize the importance of keeping up with the assignments. 40% of the grade. If you fall behind now you will be lost and test results will not save you.
- The importance of news. Quick discussion of what is in the news, including developments in the healthcare debate.
- Written assignment due: **YouTube**

II. **Quiz** (include questions on the Jon Stewart article students are required to read before class)

III. **“My Life As...”**

- Discuss Upcoming speaker

IV. Review the #1 Rule in News Literacy: Know Which Neighborhood You Are In

V. Fill Out the Remainder of the **Information Grid**. Students should bring 2 copies of the grid: one that they filled out and a blank one (a good idea to bring extra blank copies for students who didn't bring one). You will have a completed copy in the background material. Go over in detail client, methods, practitioners and outcomes. You can do this on the board in front of the room. Go over the definitions again and ask the students to give other examples. This is a key document for the course. We will post a version, but it is important students actively work to fill it out in the classroom.

VI. Discussion and debate:

- Are the **YouTube** clips that we posted on Blackboard journalism or unfiltered information? Can discuss what the proper

name for information on the Internet is? Raw? Unfiltered? Can show the clips if you have a computer capable classroom, but watching these was part of the assignment. Discuss each clip:

* **Clip 1:** <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nlNORX006-c>

Is this just a video of soldiers involved in battle? Ask: what neighborhood are you in? Why is this not journalism or news? It is raw information. Who recorded it? Who are they answerable to? What process of verification did it go through? If students do not notice this, be sure to point out the source of this video: www.MNF-IRAQ.COM, the website for the Multinational Forces in Iraq. Therefore, **this clip violates the journalistic principle of independence.**

***Clip 2:** (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lafbpfSg6HQ>)

A CNN report on the war. What neighborhood are we in? News? It is identified as a CNN report. The reporter is identified. Does it have verification? Independence? Accountability? Can discuss what we mean by these terms in terms of this video. Does anyone fear that this comes from someone other than CNN and was doctored on the Internet? Overall it looks as if it is a solid, news report.

***Clip 3:** (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aEOO8O4E8tc>)

My Iraq Music Video: What neighborhood? Why? It is raw information with an entertainment element. Is he a journalist? What is his purpose here? To whom is he accountable?

The overall point is that a news consumer has to be aware, especially on the Internet of what neighborhood he or she is in. It takes some work, takes so analyzing of the material. You cannot accept everything or anything that comes on the Internet as news.

VII. Recap: The characteristics of journalism.

***Verification:** evidence that establishes or confirms the accuracy or truth of something

***Independence:** freedom from the control, influence, support, aid, or the like, of others.

***Accountability:** subject to the obligation to report, explain, or justify something; responsible; answerable.

VIII. Discussion of **Jon Stewart**

--Is Jon Stewart a Journalist? Why? Why Not? Discuss the article on Stewart. Does he deserve this attention? Is he worth watching? Why? Why not? But is he a journalist. Is he independent? Does he verify his material? To whom is he accountable?

-- Recap: What distinguishes a journalist:

- *The primary focus is on informing the public;

- *Does not intentionally employ deception or manipulation (by omission or commission);

- * Does not subjugate journalistic mission to other interests, or compromise independence;

- * Subjects works to disciplined level of verification and transparency,

- * Stands behind work, accountable.

--By these standards, do you think Jon Stewart qualify as a journalist?

IX. If time permits, review the United States' policy on propaganda discussed the previous week. Remind students of the Armstrong Williams case (See Background Material). He posed as a journalist, but was also on the government payroll. What is the problem here? What did he do? Why is it wrong? Can relate to questions of government control of information from the previous lecture and recitation. U.S. paying Iraqi journalists. Is that propaganda? Is it legal? What is the difference between the government doing such a thing inside the U.S. and overseas? The important distinction here is that the government cannot do this inside the country, but can do it overseas. Also can relate the government control of information and the previous lecture.

X. **Assignments (see Blackboard for more details):**