

JRN 101/103

Lecture 4: Mission of the American Press

There's limited time in lecture to review the kind of detailed reporting that demonstrates the work of journalists in their role as the Fourth Estate, or the Watchdog.

Students are encouraged to spend time reading and watching them, particularly students who do not normally read this kind of journalism.

It is very different from the typical daily work and cleaves closely to the idea of this course: that citizens can only make full use of their rights and responsibilities when they are well-informed.

- Whistleblowers in the Nuclear Regulatory Commission expose lax oversight: <http://www.propublica.org/article/whistleblowers-say-nuclear-regulatory-commission-watchdog-is-losing-its-bar>
- The most expensive fighter jet ever made (\$65 billion and counting) is still grounded: <http://www.propublica.org/blog/item/despite-65-billion-investment-worlds-most-costly-jet-still-grounded>
- Crime lab in Houston has a backlog of more than 3,000 untested rape kits (a corollary to reporting on Nassau County Crime Lab failures in recent cases): <http://www.chron.com/news/houston-texas/article/HPD-rape-case-backlog-is-far-worse-than-feared-2082206.php#ixzz1UfUOK1Gw>
- Tracking the revolving door between Congress and lobbying firms: <http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2011/08/06/us/politics/20110803-the-111th-congress-and-the-lobby.html?smid=tw-nytimes>
- VIDEO: CBS news on the ATF's rank incompetence and the so-called "gunwalker scandal," in which the bureau had gun shops sell weapons to drug traffickers in order to track them; but many of them were used in crimes while ATF continued to let the guns "walk": <http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2011/06/10/earlyshow/main20070475.shtml>