

Recitation 01 - Why News Literacy Matters

OBJECTIVE

We wrote this recitation guide to start, without preamble, an exercise that gets students right into the heart of the course: finding reliable information. You'll lead this discussion, then do all the housekeeping work to start your semester, and (most importantly) lead an ice-breaker activity that will get everyone acquainted. That activity will take up to 30 minutes, but pays dividends all semester long.

I. Class Exercise

Why News Literacy Matters: The News Consumer's dilemma, or "How do I know what to believe?" (A 10-minut warm-up exercise.)

Read aloud, email ahead of time or have students read copies in class (while stragglers wander in) of a **story on President Obama's proposal this week to reign in the cost of college**. Highlight conflicting claims about the wisdom of the proposal or the reasons behind the escalating cost of college.

Who is right?

How do you know?

Why is it important to find out?

What's at stake for you?

Now at this point you say something like "Welcome to News Literacy. These questions are the point of this course: making sure you know how to find reliable information you can act on.

II. Course Organization

1. Review how this course will help you become a better news consumer by teaching you:
 - a) To distinguish between legitimate news and other kinds of info.
 - b) To gauge reliability and credibility of news reports (broadcast, print or internet)
 - c) To understand the mission of the press
 - d) To understand how news decisions are made
 - e) To not be manipulated and deceived by Internet sources
 - f) To become a responsible news consumer
2. Review syllabus: Students should have brought paper copy of syllabus. Review it together. (Or, open it from Blackboard and show it on the projector.) They'll be quizzed on the contents at the next recitation.
 - a) Some sections to emphasize and/or elaborate on:
 - Intended outcomes – relate back to discussion of attitudes
 - Required texts and readings

- Attendance policy
 - Assignments – explain how SafeAssign works
 - Gradebook and how to retrieve graded assignments
 - Plagiarism (Please emphasize this conversation)
 - Grading policies, including curve on assignments
 - Blackboard™. Freshmen get zero training, so warn them to practice.
- b) Check for confusion. Emphasize they need to go to Blackboard and get comfortable with it. The Teaching and Learning center website has excellent video tutorial through “Lynda.com” that answer any questions on any software.
- c) Stress importance of doing assignments and attending classes. It is possible to do well on tests and the final paper and do poorly in this course if you skip classes and don’t turn in homework on time.
3. Take attendance.

Explain the News Quiz

NOTE: There is no news quiz the first week. Inform students of how you’ll run your weekly quiz and if there will be a syllabus quiz next week.

III From Gutenberg to Zuckerberg Redux : Recap Lecture 1 and discuss their homework, which they were to bring.

You may want to ask the students first what they learned from the first lecture.

On the board, list the big changes they thought were wrought by the Gutenberg press

Now the changes wrought on society by the Internet, the web and social media.

Are these iterations of the same effects or is something really new going on here?

Do the changes in technology make it easier or harder for news consumers to discover the truth? Why?

IV Homework. Collect talking points.

REMIND STUDENTS THERE IS NO LECTURE THE FOLLOWING WEEK. Next recitation class meets in one week.

In preparation for the next class, review these assignments and deadlines.

Read PEW study on public opinion and the press. Be prepared to discuss in class.

CPJ written assignment due before recitation #2.

AND.....THE BLACKOUT (introduce with dramatic flair). **DUE BY MONDAY**

Note: Religious holiday for some students Thursday-Friday

