

News Literacy midterm tests

The two midterm tests in News Literacy are conducted in recitation.

Each test is made up of 10 sets of short-answer questions to be answered in 80 minutes. Not multiple choice. Not bubble sheets.

You'll want to read each set carefully, circling each part that requires an answer. Unlike NY Regents tests, we ask compound questions. The most common way for students to lose points is by failing to address every part of the question.

While preparing, keep in mind that rote memorization is less important than understanding. By looking at the **"Students will be able to"** slide in each lecture, you can identify the concepts you're expected to explain.

In addition to your notes and the slide decks in the Student Handouts folder, you can also review EchoRecordings of each lecture at <https://echocontent.sinc.stonybrook.edu/ess/echo/presentation/192e36fb-8bec-4fea-8001-09d48a1addf3>.

Many of the questions will require you to use a recent news story to illustrate your answer. Since you're studying at least 10 stories a week for the News Quiz, you already have plenty of material. All you need to do is think about how the big concepts of these lectures relate to recent news. We don't require a bibliographic citation, but in summarizing a story that you use for an example, get the basic facts right and include the outlet and approximate date. Don't offer hypothetical examples when specific ones are requested.

The examples below were mocked up to give you an idea how we cluster questions, how we draw them from the course material and the kinds of answers you are expected to provide.

- 1. During the first week of the course, we compared two information revolutionaries. Who were they? What did they have in common?**

Johann Gutenberg, inventor of movable type and therefore mass-produced books and Mark Zuckerberg, inventor of Facebook. Both of them made it easier to publish and distribute information, giving the weak and poor a greater chance to educate themselves and to be heard.

- 2. We assert, in week two, that humans have a DNA-like universal need for information of three types: A_____, D_____, C_____. Fill in the rest of the word for each of those three types. Then, describe a recent news story that illustrates one of those types. Finally, turn that story into the cave-dweller equivalent of itself.**

Alerts, Diverts, Connects. On Friday (9/25), CNN reported on the Chicago airport shutdown. It alerted travelers to delays, just as a cave-dweller might have told his cave-mates of a rock slide closing an important hunting trail.

- 3. Napoleon said "Four hostile newspapers are more to be feared than a thousand bayonets." How would Obama express the same idea, using references to modern media and military technologies? What event might provoke Obama to sound like Napoleon?**

"Four hostile hackers are more to be feared than a Russian bomber," the president shouted at his cabinet, in June of 2013 after Edward Snowden leaked thousands of pages of top-secret documents he stole from the NSA.

- 4. The framers and the Supreme Court prevent the government from stepping in to prevent defamatory publications. What is the phrase courts use to describe this, and describe a recent news story that illustrates this First Amendment protection of the right to a free press?**

"No prior restraint" is the phrase. The Washington Post's reports during the week of Sept. 25 documented lapses in White House security. 'Not something the Secret Service wanted out there, but the Post could not be stopped because of the First Amendment's guarantee of freedom of the press.

- 5. What are the three characteristics of the most reliable information neighborhood? Describe how a recent news report includes all three characteristics.**

Verification, Independence, Accountability. The Oct. 2 report in the NY Times about the death of a Wading River football player. Verification: included on-the-scene, interviews, photos, official statements of cause of death.

Independence: The report was prepared by a reporter for a distant paper, not the school board-controlled newsletter.

Accountability: The story included a reporter's byline (name) and the newspaper's name, which means they can be held accountable by name for errors, if any.