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You Know The Story...



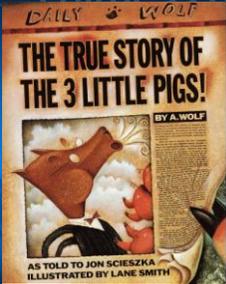
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What is missing?



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Balance, Fairness and Bias



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Balance, Fairness and Bias

So I walked down the street to ask my neighbor for a cup of sugar.
Now this neighbor was a pig.
And he wasn't too bright, either.
He had built his whole house out of straw.
Can you believe it? I mean who in his right mind would build a house of straw?



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Balance, Fairness and Bias



And you know what? That whole darn straw house fell down. And right in the middle of the pile of straw was the First Little Pig—dead as a doornail.
He had been in the whole town.

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Balance, Fairness and Bias



The rest, as they say, is history.

What's Missing?



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"63 percent of respondents said news articles were often inaccurate and only 29 percent said the media generally 'get the facts straight.'"

 The Pew Research Center for the People & the Press

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*-Chapter 7-
Balance, Fairness and Bias*

"In which our hero, (you) wrestles with the meaning of balance, the wisdom of fairness and the subtleties of bias..."

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Housekeeping



A cartoon illustration of a man in a white uniform and cap, sweeping with a broom. The background is blue with wavy lines.

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News Matters



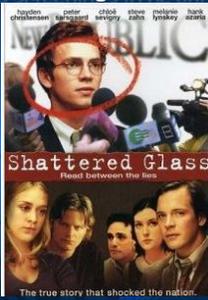
Gaddarfield

A cartoon illustration of a yellow, four-legged creature with a speech bubble that says "I LOVE LAXATIVE AND CANNONS TO POWER". The background is blue with wavy lines.

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Shattered Glass Viewings:

Available on Blackboard, on Netflix, at the Library and at on-campus screenings to be announced



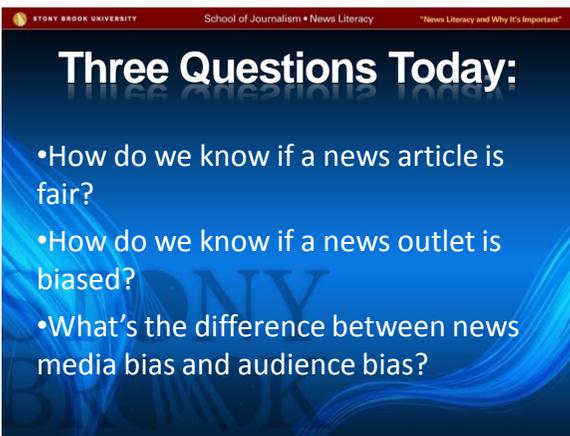
Shattered Glass
Based between the lies

The true story that shocked the nation.

A movie poster for "Shattered Glass" featuring James Van Der Beek and other cast members. The background is blue with wavy lines.







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Balance, Fairness and Bias



"Why Aren't More Women Dying in Chicago?"

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What's the Difference Between Fairness and Balance?

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Key Definitions

Main Entry: **balance** 

Pronunciation: \ˈbɑ-lən(t)s\

Function: *noun*

Etymology: Middle English, from Anglo-French, from Vulgar Latin **bilanctā*, from Late Latin *bilanc-*, *bilanx* having two scalepans, from Latin *bi-* + *lanc-*, *lanx* plate

Date: 13th century

Balance: Equality between the totals of the two (or more) sides of the account. Balance is more technical; a quantitative measurement.

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What Is Balance?

Discord Fills Washington on Possible Libya Intervention

"He keeps reminding us that the best revolutions are completely organic," the senior official said, quoting the president.



At the same time, there are persistent voices – in Congress and even inside the administration – arguing that Mr. Obama is moving too slowly. They contend that there is too much concern about perceptions, and that the White House is too squeamish because of Iraq.

Furthermore, they say a military caught up in two difficult wars has exaggerated the risks of imposing a no-fly zone over Libya, the tactic discussed most often.

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Can Balance Be the Opposite of Fairness?



Should Holocaust Deniers Get Equal Space?

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Is Balance the Same as Fairness?

guardian.co.uk Democrats roll out climate change big guns, Republicans remain immune
Climate hearing appears to fail to sway Republicans before Thursday's vote on curbing Obama's green ambitions



Should Climate Change Doubters Get Equal Space?

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Key Definitions

Main Entry: **fair** ◀▶
 Pronunciation: \ˈfɛr\
 Function: *adjective*
 Etymology: Middle English *fager, fair*, from Old English *fæger*; akin to Old High German *fagar* beautiful
 Date: before 12th century

Fairness: Marked by impartiality and honesty. Free from self-interest, prejudice, or favoritism. Being fair to the evidence.

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Finding Fairness

- Obvious effort to include relevant perspectives
- People, Organizations get to respond to negative charges
 - Avoids loaded words
- Avoids prejudicial photos/presentation
- Provides *context* and *transparency*.

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Fair, Unfair, or Biased?



School Bus Aide Busted Dealing Methadone







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How to Spot Bias

- Look for a *pattern* of unfairness over time
 - Compare a variety of news outlets - especially to search for a bias by omission
- Evidence is the essence of a credible conclusion.

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Bias in the News

A Pattern of Unfairness?

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Mistake or Bias?

Where's Obama?

TROOPS KILLED SIX PEOPLE TODAY DURING A RAID ON A POSSIBLE

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Common Flaws in "Bias" Claims

- "The news media is biased" is an over-generalization. Some outlets, maybe.
- Opinion Journalism by an organization doesn't necessarily prove there's slant in the news coverage.
- Guilt by association is a fallacy.

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The stronger the emotion, The more likely bias will be charged:



- Politics
- Race and Gender
- Social Issues
- Religion

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News Judgment or Bias?

The New York Times N.Y. / Region

WORLD | U.S. | N.Y. / REGION | BUSINESS | TECHNOLOGY | SCIENCE | HEALTH | SPORTS | OPINION

Cuomo Vows Personal Push to Legalize Gay Marriage

By MICHAEL BARBARO and NICHOLAS CONFESSORE
Published: 12/15/2010



Choosing a story to cover is not de-facto proof of bias.

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The Washington Post

NEWS | LOCAL | POLITICS | SPORTS | OPINIONS | BUSINESS | ARTS & LIVING | GOING OUT GUIDE | JOBS | CARS | REAL ESTATE | SHOPPING

Supreme Court rules First Amendment protects church's right to picket funerals



"Speech is powerful. It can ...inflict great pain. We cannot react to that pain by punishing the speaker. As a Nation we have chosen a different course - to protect even hurtful speech on public issues to ensure that we do not stifle public debate."

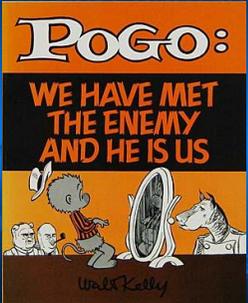
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More Language Landmarks

- "Right-to-Life" vs. "Anti-Abortion"
- "Pro-Choice" vs. "Pro-Abortion"
- "Ruthless" vs. "Tough"
- "Admitted" vs. "Said"
- "Islamic Community Center" vs. "Ground Zero Mosque"

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Working with... And against human nature



Walt Kelly

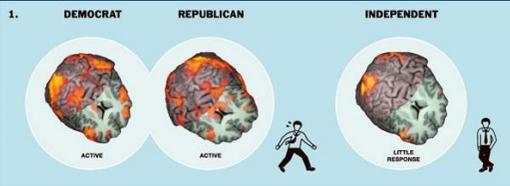
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Brain.wmv

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Cognitive Dissonance: Democratic Brains vs. Republican Brains

1. DEMOCRAT REPUBLICAN INDEPENDENT



ACTIVE ACTIVE LITTLE RESPONSE

This is Your Brain on Politics

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Responses to Cognitive Dissonance

Selective Distortion & Retention
People tend to distort (or forget) incoming information if it does not match their point of view.

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Responses to Cognitive Dissonance

Source Misattribution
When they do remember sources, people may selectively attribute comforting information to a more respectable source .

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Responses to Cognitive Dissonance

Confirmation Bias

We tend to pursue information that only reflects our point of view.

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Responses to Cognitive Dissonance

Peer Influence on Perception

Our perceptions of things like size or distance can be impaired by group pressure.

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Responses to Cognitive Dissonance



Obama's 2012 Budget Offers More Gimmmicks, Not Reform

Published on March 9, 2011 by Brian Stiel

Blame it on the 2012 budget proposal. President Obama uses lofty rhetoric about fiscal wellness and hard-choice-and-proceeds-to-give-the-green-light-to-get-more-spending-yet-higher-taxes-and-aligning-act-the-budget-fails-to-reform-uncontrollable-expenditures-is-merely-tried-on-non-discretionary-spending-and-to-battle-with-gimmicks-and-cost-plus-contractors. Any responsible budget must now next to spending and deficits. Heritage Foundation budgetary expert Brian Stiel says the realities of the President's new budget.



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News Bias vs. Audience Bias



The War in Lebanon, 1982

Does Being More Informed Guarantee That You Will Be a Less-Biased News Consumer?

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"Hostile Media Effect"



The War in Lebanon, 1982

- A belief among partisans that news reports are painting them in the worst possible light.
- People who are deeply involved in one side of an issue or another are quicker to spot and remember aspects of a news story that are negative.
- The best-informed partisans are the most likely to see bias.

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Voters on the State of the Economy

The American economy had a major downturn starting in the fall of 2008.

Do you think that now the American economy is:

Starting to Recover?
Still Getting Worse? **55%**

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Voters on Scientists' Views of Climate Change

Do you think that MOST SCIENTISTS believe that:

- Climate change is occurring
- Views are evenly divided
- Climate change is not occurring

45%

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Voters on Income Tax Levels

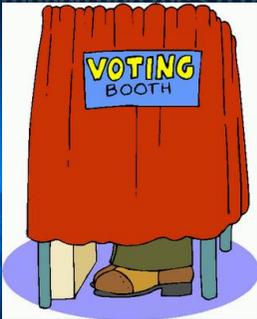
Since January 2009 have your Federal income taxes:

- Gone Down
- Stayed the Same
- Gone up

86%

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Misinformation and the 2010 Election



University of Maryland Study

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Is Individual Objectivity Realistic?



Is Organizational Objectivity More Realistic?



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Journalists submit to the discipline of **V**erification, a newsroom system of aggressive peer review and a code of ethics that defines **I**ndependence, and demands transparency-based **A**ccountability.

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Three Questions Today:

- How do we know if a news article is fair?
- How do we know if a news outlet is biased?
- What's the difference between news media bias and audience bias?

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Warnings to News Consumers

- Recognize Your Own Bias
- Test Your Assumptions Against Evidence

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Habit of Savviest News Consumers:

- Challenge Yourself: Go Outside Your Comfort Zone

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Today's Key Lessons of News Literacy:

- Don't judge the news media on the basis of one news outlet or story. Don't judge one outlet on the basis of one mistake. Look for patterns.
- Stay Open to Information That Challenges Your Previously-Held Beliefs and Assumptions

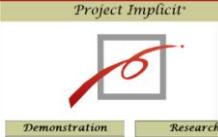
Previous key lessons...

- Know what neighborhood you're in
- In the News Neighborhood, differentiate News from Opinion

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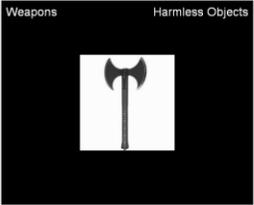
What are your biases?

Project Implicit



Demonstration Research

Weapons Harmless Objects



Project Implicit

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Balance, Fairness and Bias



Is this what college women really do on Spring Break?

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