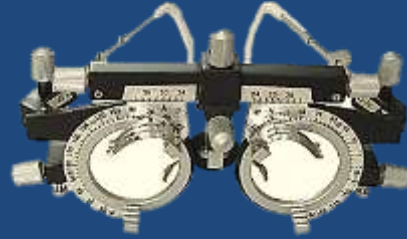


After this lecture, students will be able to:

1. Distinguish Balance from Fairness and news media bias from audience bias.
2. Explain why unexamined public acceptance of charges of news media bias might be unhealthy in a democracy.
3. Use specific events and examples to illustrate news media bias and audience bias.
4. Explain the difference between news judgment (a professional mindset characterized by attention to drivers, mission and market in selecting stories) and news media bias (unethical pursuit of political or social goals)

These skills relate to course outcomes 3 & 4

Checking Your Lenses



Bias, Balance, Fairness & You

When Voters Are Misinformed

Since January 2009 have your Federal income taxes:



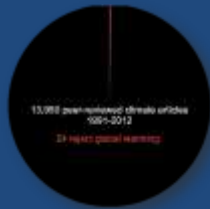
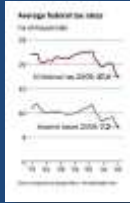
- A) Gone Down
- B) Stayed the Same
- C) Gone up

Voters on Climate Change

Do you think that MOST SCIENTISTS believe that:

- A) Climate change is occurring
- B) Views are evenly divided
- C) Climate change is not occurring

Misinformation and the 2010 Election



www.worldpublicopinion.org / University of Maryland Study

Misinformation and the Election

“Do most scientists think that climate change is not occurring?”

(percent who agree with this statement)

People who rarely watch Fox News...

Watch Fox once a week...

Watch Fox almost every day...

Misinformation and the Electorate



Media Bias

Audience Bias

Cognitive Dissonance

Media Bias, Audience Bias or Cognitive Dissonance?

Three Questions Today:




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



Housekeeping, Announcements & Notes

Extra Credit Event #2

Sandra Peddie
Pulitzer Prize Winning Investigative Reporter



Online video available
for students who could not attend
Watch Blackboard for the link

News Matters!

*Which Matters Made
News on Your Homepage
TODAY?*

And

*What Course Concepts
Were on Display This Week?*

Shattered Glass Viewings:
Available on Blackboard, on Netflix, and online.



The movie poster for 'Shattered Glass' features a man in a suit and glasses, with a red circle around his head. Below him are three other people. The title 'Shattered Glass' is written in a stylized font.

News Media Bias An Optical Problem? Or A Real Problem?



What the Public Sees



- 74% say news organizations tend to favor one side in dealing with political and social issues
- 50% believe the media has a liberal slant
- 22% believe the media has a conservative slant

The Pew Research Center for the People & the Press

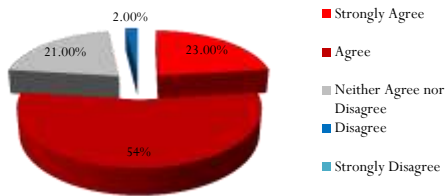
~2009 survey
Press Accuracy Rating Hits Two Decade Low

What's Students See



"Most news outlets exhibit bias"

Spring 2013 Students

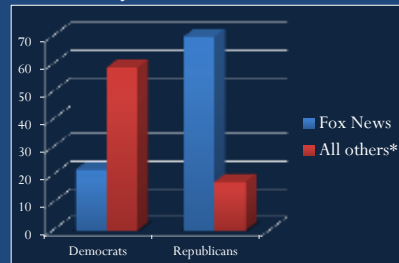


-Source:
S2013 Reality Check Survey
929 respondents

Different Lenses Same Reality



Who do you trust?



* All others: PBS, NBC, MSNBC, CBS, CNN, ABC

Knows it When He Sees It



“Now, it is common knowledge that the mainstream media from the major television networks to the country’s most influential newspapers are biased against the GOP.”
- Sean Hannity, FOX News

Knows it When She Sees It

"Hosts on Fox raise money on the air for Republican candidates, they endorse them explicitly, they use their Fox News profile to headline fundraisers ... They can do that because there's no rule against that at Fox. They run as a political operation, we're not."

– Rachel Maddow, MSNBC



What Does Evidence Show?



What's the Difference Between Fairness and Balance?

You Know The Story...



In This News Story
What is Missing?



"It all started with a cup of sugar and a sneeze."

-Alexander T. Wolf





What Is Missing?

Key Definitions

Main Entry: **'balance** 
 Pronunciation: \ˈbɑ-ləns(t)s/
 Function: noun
 Etymology: Middle English, from Anglo-French, from Vulgar Latin **bālanctia*, from Late Latin *bālanct-*, *bālanct-* having two scales, from Latin *bā-* + *lanct-*, *lanct-* 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.

What Is Balance?

The Budget Press

Texans Rebut Gov. Rick Perry on Expansion of Medicaid

By David L. ...

"If you have a chance to provide that coverage and improve health care, then in the long run, you're going to have a healthier, more productive state," said Dr. Roland A. Goertz, the chief executive of the Waco Family Health Center, which treats thousands of Medicaid and uninsured patients annually.

"It would be irresponsible to add more Texans and dump more taxpayer dollars into a broken and unsustainable system that already consumes a quarter of our budget, making it harder to pay for other things like public safety and education," Ms. Nashed said.

Can Balance Be the Opposite of Fairness?



Should Holocaust Deniers Get Equal Space?

Can Balance Be the Opposite of Fairness?

Amanpour Moral Equivalency.wmv

The Massacres in Bosnia

Is Balance the Same as Fairness?

INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS TIMES

2012: A Year Of Climate Change Wake-Up Calls



Key Definitions

Main Entry: **fair** 
Pronunciation: /fɛr/
Function: adjective
Etymology: Middle English *fager*, *fair*, from Old English *fager*, akin to Old High German *fager* beautiful
Date: before 12th century

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

Finding Fairness:

- Fair play
- Fair language
- Fair presentation

Fair play:

- Obvious effort to include relevant perspectives
- People, Organizations get to respond to negative charges

Fair Play?

Hurricane Katrina and the "Two-Photo Controversy"

The image shows a screenshot of a news article. The top photo shows a person in floodwaters, looking towards the camera. The bottom photo shows the same person from a different angle, looking away. The article text discusses the controversy over which photo was used to represent the impact of Hurricane Katrina.

More Language Landmarks

- “Right-to-Life” vs. “Anti-Abortion”
- “Pro-Choice” vs. “Pro-Abortion”
- “Ruthless” vs. “Tough”
- “Admitted” vs. “Said”
- “Gay Marriage” vs. “Marriage Equality”

Fair language?

HUFFPOST MEDIA

Ann Coulter Boed During John Stossel Debate After Criticizing Libertarians, Gay Marriage

The Huffington Post | By Stephanie Hwang |
 Posted: 02/22/2013 11:18 am EST | Updated: 02/22/2013 12:43 pm EST



INFOWARS.COM


Neocon Hack Ann Coulter Attacks Libertarians

Infowars.com
 February 22, 2013

Fair Presentation:

- Avoids prejudicial photos
- Presents photos and other visuals that are appropriate to the report

Fair Presentation:



Fair, Unfair, or Biased?



School Bus Aide Busted Dealing Methadone

busted.wmv

What is Bias?

Main Entry: **bias** 
 Pronunciation: \ˈbi-əs\
 Function: noun
 Etymology: Middle French *biais*
 Date: 1550

Bias: A predisposition that distorts your ability to fairly weigh the evidence and prevents you from reaching a fair or accurate judgment.

How to Spot Bias

- Look for evidence of a pattern of unfairness over time
- Compare a variety of news outlets especially to search for a bias by omission
- Take note of the self-interest of those alleging bias

The News Literacy Definition:

Bias:
a pattern of unfairness

Bias is a *Pattern*



Common Flaws in “Bias” Claims

- **“The news media is biased” is an over-generalization.**
- **Opinion Journalism on the “Opinions” page or tab or in one time-slot of a broadcast doesn’t necessarily prove there’s slant in entire news product.**

Opinion or Bias?

How Obama torched our standing in the Arab world

By Liz Frenk | Published December 20, 2012 | FoxNews.com



Mitt Romney is right

By Don Maris | Published September 18, 2012 | FoxNews.com

News Judgment or Bias?

Is heavy news coverage of same-sex marriage legislation evidence of bias?



News Judgment or Bias?



Bias or Something Else?



“Why Aren’t More Women Dying in Chicago?”

News Judgment or Racism?



LaToya Figueroa and Natalee Holloway:
Differences in Coverage

News Judgment or Bias?



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

Bias in the News



A Pattern of Unfairness?

Obama's War Against Fox News



"What I think is fair to say about Fox — and certainly it's the only one I think that I really is more a wing of the Republican Party than anything else — is that it really is more a wing of the Republican Party than anything else. (White House communications director, on CNN)

"It's astounding the White House cannot distinguish between news and opinion programming," Clemente said. "It seems self-serving on their part."

As for Dunn's complaint about Fox News' coverage of the Obama campaign, a study by the Pew Research Center showed that 40 percent of Fox News stories on Obama in the last six weeks of the campaign were negative. Similarly, 40 percent of Fox News' stories on Obama's Republican opponent, Sen. John McCain, were negative.

Journalism's Critics Claim



A Monopoly On Trustworthy Optics
What Do You Think?

Is Individual Objectivity Realistic? Is Organizational Objectivity More Realistic?



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.

Conclusions

Are there examples of unfair news stories?

Absolutely

Is unfairness an automatic sign of bias?

No

Can a news outlet exhibit bias?

Yes, but it's easier to allege than to prove

Is the *perception* of bias as dangerous as bias itself?

Yes

Bias in Them, Us and You



Media Bias (Them)



Audience Bias (Us)




Cognitive Dissonance (You)

You (Really) Want The Truth?




Codered.wmv

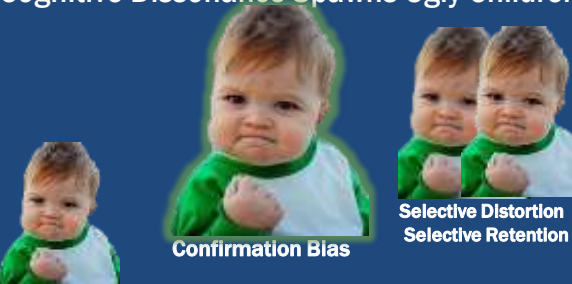
What are your biases?



“Project Implicit” Homework Step #1



Cognitive Dissonance Spawns Ugly Children




Confirmation Bias

Selective Distortion
Selective Retention

Source Misattribution

Watch the Cognitive Dissonance video then “Project Implicit” homework



- ### Today’s Key Lessons :
- ✓ Bias is a Pattern. Not an event.
 - ✓ Your Mind May Not Be Open, After All.

