

INTERDISCIPLINARY COURSE ON NEWS LITERACY AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT



The goal is to encourage students to have a politically and civically engaged identity enhancing the capacity to evaluate political and media landscape and make informed decisions about participation in our democracy. As evidenced by the growth in coalitions, professional development opportunities and civic education research, to help prepare the next generation of citizens to become tomorrow's "Stewards of Place".

Course Objectives:

- Why news matters, especially in a civically engaged citizenry;
- The significance of community awareness and civic engagement;
- The relevance of becoming a life-long learner;
- The necessity of accurate research;
- How to leverage critical thinking skills through key news literacy, information literacy, and media literacy techniques;
- How to evaluate diverse news resources and be responsible news consumers

Student learning outcomes:

1. Analyze verbally and in writing how an awareness of the news, ranging from hyper-local to global reporting enriches their lives as individual people, citizens, thinkers, students and employees;
2. Articulate information taxonomy as a news literacy concept;
3. Distinguish between news literacy, information literacy and media literacy;
4. Identify fact and opinion when analyzing the logic and rhetoric employed in news stories;

5. Identify the theories of agenda-setting and gatekeeping;
6. Illustrate verbally and in writing how the political “watchdog,” agenda-setting, and gatekeeping functions of the news industry affect the society that the industry serves
7. Evaluate verbally and in writing the key elements of any news account, evidence,
8. sources, and contexts, to judge reliability and biases;
9. Synthesize information from varying media sources toward determining accuracy and reliability.
10. Prioritize information to construct a basic inverted pyramid-structured news story from a set of information given to the student.

Topical Outline/Essential Questions:

Why do I (the student) need to pay attention to what is happening in the news?

Why do I (the student) need to pay attention to news events in other parts of the world?

How does the news affect my personal life? How does it affect our society as a whole?

Where can I find news that I can trust?

How do less objective or rigorous forms of news, like partisan political news or celebrity gossip, fit into the larger news industry?

Why is it important to research and analyze the news beyond the surface level?

How will becoming news literate impact and contribute to becoming a lifelong learner?

How can I more actively participate in the creation and consumption of the news?

Why is it important to understand news beyond the surface level?

News Literacy concepts or skills to be incorporated

- Why News
- Power of Information
- What is News
- Balance Fairness and Bias
- Truth and Verification

Values/Life Skills:

1. Foster a civic ethos across the campus culture.
2. Make civic and news literacy a core expectation for all students.
3. Practice civic and media inquiry across all fields of study.
4. Advance civic action through transformative partnerships.

Notes: Refer to Emmitt Till and Zimmerman video