

After this lecture, students will be able to:

1. Identify the distinguishing characteristics of the subset of Journalism known as "opinion Journalism"
2. Cite examples that illustrate the value of opinion Journalism
3. Understand differences between historical and modern uses of opinion Journalism.
4. Distinguish between opinion Journalism and "mere assertion"

These skills relate to course outcomes 5, 4 & 2

Journalism, Opinion Journalism and Mere Assertion: What's Reliable and What Is Not

"Everyone is entitled to their own opinions, but they are not entitled to their own facts."



Daniel Patrick Moynihan (deceased)
U.S. Senator from New York

"We know that there are enough members in the House of Representatives ...to vote to reopen the government today. The only thing that is keeping that from happening is Speaker Boehner..."

-President Barack Obama

"The nation's credit is at risk because of the administration's refusal to have a conversation,"

-House Speaker John Boehner



"Under Obamacare, people who *have a doctor they've been seeing for the last 15 or 20 years, they won't be able to keep going to that doctor.*"

U.S. Sen. Marco Rubio, R-Fla.,

Because of Obamacare, health care premiums have "gone up slower than any time in the last 50 years."

President Barack Obama



Actionable information?



Symbol	Price	Change	Volume
DJIA	12,000	-1,600	100M
S&P 500	1,200	-160	50M
NASDAQ	3,000	-400	30M

Santellinormal.wmv

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Actionable Information?



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Opinion Journalists Go Where Reporters Dare Not Tread



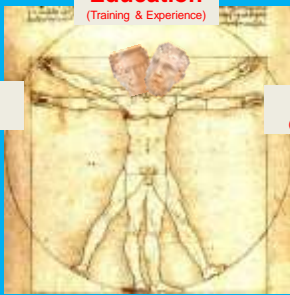
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Financial Independence

Education
(Training & Experience)

Affiliation
(Religion & Politics)

Affection
(Lovers, Family & Friends)



Funding
(Assets & Income)

Independence ≠ Neutrality



PAUL KRUGMAN CRITICIZES OBAMA OVER NSA SCANDAL

Mitt Romney, the pretzel candidate

By George F. Will, October 28, 2012



What is Opinion Doing in the Journalism Neighborhood?



Code of Ethics: (excerpts)

- ✓ Distinguish between advocacy and news reporting.
- ✓ Analysis and commentary should be labeled and not misrepresent fact or context.
- ✓ Deny favored treatment to advertisers and special interests and resist their pressure to influence news coverage.
- ✓ Remain free of associations and activities that may compromise integrity or damage credibility.

IT'S STILL ABOUT V.I.A.



Verification:

"Analysis and commentary should be labeled and not misrepresent fact or context."

Independence:

"Deny favored treatment to advertisers and special interests... (and) remain free of associations and activities that may compromise integrity or damage credibility."

Accountability

"Analysis and commentary should be labeled and not misrepresent fact or context."

Definition of News

Main Entry: **news** 🗣️
 Pronunciation: \ˈnūz, ˈnyūz\
 Function: *noun plural but singular in construction*
 Usage: *often attributive*
 Date: 15th century

Timely information about a subject of some public interest that is shared and subject to the journalistic process of verification by an independent organization that is accountable.

Definition of Opinion

Main Entry: **opinion** 🗣️
 Pronunciation: ˈə-ˈpi-n-yən
 Function: *noun*
 Etymology: Middle English, from Anglo-French, from Latin *opinion-*, *opinio*, from *opinari*
 Date: 14th century

Opinion is a view, a judgment, or an appraisal formed in the mind about a particular matter.

Warning:

A News Report will often include the opinions of experts, participants or witnesses. That is not what is meant by "Opinion Journalism."

A Brief History of Opinion Journalism



Alexander Hamilton Starts the *New York Post* and Attacks Thomas Jefferson

The Rise of the Non-Partisan Press

Mass-Market Publishing –

Newspapers profited by attracting a wide variety of readers and advertisers



The Opinion Quarantine

Editorials



The Opinion Quarantine



Columns



An Opinion Quarantine on TV?

foxhours.wmv

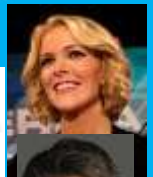
What Happens When Lines Blur?

foxhours2.wmv

FOX & MSNBC
With Head-to-head Talkers
News or Opinion?

Megyn Kelly up against Rachel Maddow with 9 p.m. show, Sean Hannity bumped to 10

The Fox News daytime anchor now competing against Piers Morgan and Rachel Maddow
BY DANIEL O'NEILL



An Opinion Niche Is Partisan Cable TV Inheriting the Role of Hamilton-era Newsletters?



Four Questions:

1. How do you tell the difference between News Reporting and Opinion Journalism?
2. Why should you care which is which?
3. What is the value of Opinion Journalism?
4. How do you tell the difference between Opinion Journalism and mere assertion?

Question # 1:

How do we tell the difference between
News Reporting and Opinion Journalism?



Labels Can Be Helpful

- ◆ Reporter's Notebook:
- ◆ Editorial:
- ◆ News-Page Column:
- ◆ Review:
- ◆ Op-Ed Contribution:
- ◆ News Analysis:

News and Opinion Journalism

With So Much Video, How Do You Know What Is Opinion and What is Reporting?



Language Clues

CNN.IRAN.REPORT.WMV

ZAKARIA.IRAN.OPINION.WMV

News Report or Opinion Journalism?

The News:

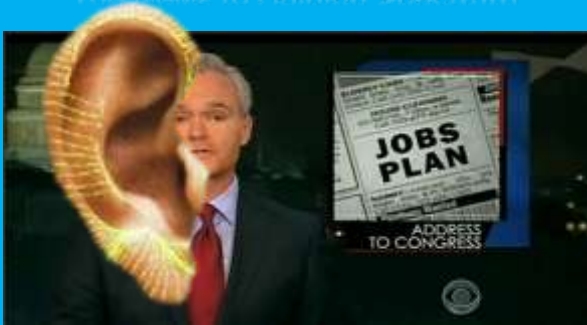
Rep. Michele Bachmann, campaigning for President, said:

"Well, I will tell you that I had a mother last night come up to me here in Tampa, Florida, after the debate. She told me that her little daughter took that vaccine, that injection, and she suffered from mental retardation thereafter... This is a very real ..."

The Editorial:

"Mrs. Bachmann's vaccine demagoguery is another matter. After the debate the Minnesotan has been making the talk show rounds implying that HPV vaccines cause 'mental retardation' on the basis of no evidence. This is the kind of know-nothingism that undermines public support for vaccination."

The News to Opinion Spectrum



The New York Times

The Opinion Pages

OP-ED COLUMNIST

The Ignorance Caucus

By PAUL KRUGMAN

Published: February 10, 2013 | 231 Comments

Last week Eric Cantor, the House majority leader, gave what his office told us would be a major policy speech. And we should be grateful for the heads-up about the speech's majorness. Otherwise, a read of the speech might have suggested that he was offering nothing more than a meager, warmed-over selection of stale ideas.

Editorial Cartoonists and Caricature



Cartoonists use exaggerated Language AND Art

Opinion Journalism: Reviews



By Caryn Ganz
August 28, 2013

"...She dances through the debris of her relationship and flexes diva vocals like pop's true savior."



Editorial Cartoonists and Caricature

Handelsmananimation.wmv

Language Clues

- First-person statements
- Exaggeration or Superlatives
- Emotional or dramatic descriptions
- Tone (sarcasm, irony, parody)

Opinion Journalism Landmarks: First-person ("I")



Exploiting the Prophet

I think a few things are going on. The first is that many Muslim countries lack a tradition of free speech, and see ridicule of the prophet as part of a larger narrative of the West's invading or humiliating the Islamic world. People in these countries sometimes also have an addled view of how the United States handles blasphemy.

Opinion Journalism Landmarks: Exaggeration or Superlatives

"Look. We are not the mouthpiece for the Democratic Party of the United States. But that party is so crackhead-incompetent at selling its own program, we thought it was important that someone point out to the public one of the party's accomplishments.

Here it is:

The current Congress...with Sen. Harry Reid of Nevada at the helm in the Senate, approved the biggest tax cut in United States history.

And the Republicans voted against it.

All we can say is that voters should keep their eyes on the ball even if the Democrats don't."

-(2010)The Reno (Nevada) News & Review

Sarcasm, Irony and Parody

© The New York Times

The Opinion Pages

OP-ED COLUMNIST

Who Do You Trust?

By MAURRIN DOWD

Published September 16, 2012 | 751 Comments



WASHINGTON — Vladimir Putin, who keeps Edward Snowden on a leash

Leash?

Sarcasm, Irony and Parody

© The New York Times

The Opinion Pages

That's Not Amore

By MAURRIN DOWD

Published October 7, 2012 | 208 Comments

WASHINGTON — John Boehner wakes up in his English basement apartment on Capitol Hill, his head still in a merlot fog.



It's a glorious autumn morning, but Boehner doesn't want to open his baby blues. He lies there, in his "Man of the House" T-shirt and Augusta National gym shorts.

He wishes he didn't have to go to work. He reaches for his Camel Ultra Lights in his supposedly stroke-free apartment.

"Oh, Lord," he groans. "How did I become that idiot Nert?"

Sarcasm, Irony and Parody



'Climate change' cultists vs. scientific evidence

By Carl Thomas / Published September 22, 2012 / FoxNews.com

Cultists?

News to Opinion Spectrum: Labeling



News to Opinion Spectrum: Labeling



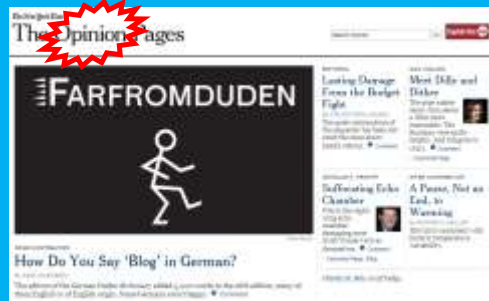
News to Opinion Spectrum



News to Opinion Spectrum



News to Opinion Spectrum



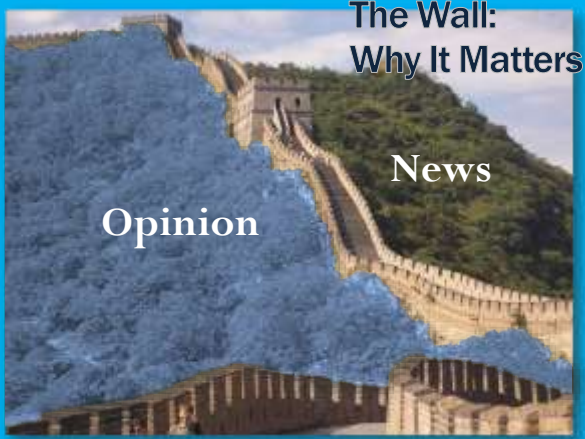
Trust Your Vote in Congress To Whom?

BlameMontage.wmv

Question #2: Why should you care which is which?

The goal of news reporting is to give you the information you need for your Fourth Estate role.

The goal of opinion journalism is to help you make up your mind about that information.



The Virtual "Wall" In Practice



Cross Not the Virtual Wall, Padawan



Pivot Point

Every other row
Pivots to the row behind
To discuss in groups of four

Why is important to separate
News from Opinion?

The Separation of 'Church' and 'State'



Newsday Looks at the Shoreham
Nuclear Power Plant in Two Ways

Question #3:

What is the value of Opinion Journalism?

- Gives you new insights
- Challenges your assumptions
- Helps you make a decision or judgment
- Provides a public forum of ideas for the public to consider.

Opinion Journalism is Valuable When:

- You are well-informed
- You are open-minded
- You are active, not passive

Question #4: How Do You Spot Mere Assertion? (Evidence vs. Emotion)



Definition of Assertion

as-ser-tion ^{as} (ə-ˈsɛr-ɪ-ən)

n.

1. The act of asserting.
2. Something declared or stated positively, often with no support or attempt at proof.

as-ser-tion (of sth)

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Opinion Journalism or Mere Assertion?



Moyers_Inequality.mov

Opinion Journalism or Mere Assertion?



Geraldo1.wmv

Opinion Journalism or Mere Assertion?

UncleRush.wmv

Journalism, Opinion Journalism or Mere Assertion Which Is It?

Santellinormal.wmv

Journalism, Opinion Journalism or Mere Assertion Which Is It?

Santellinuts.wmv

Journalism, Opinion Journalism and Mere Assertion: What's Reliable and What Is Not

"Everyone is entitled to their own opinions, but they are not entitled to their own facts."



Daniel Patrick Moynihan (deceased)
U.S. Senator from New York

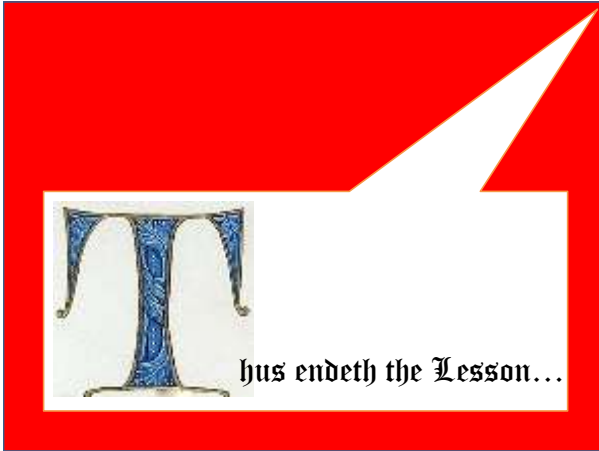
News vs. Opinion: A Summary

To tell the difference between news and opinion,
analyze language & labeling

Start with news: Know the news before you
seek opinions about the news

Moynihan's maxim: "*You're entitled to your own
opinion, but you're not entitled to your own facts.*"

Alternate views can sharpen your thinking



After this lecture, students will be able to:

1. Identify and distinguish between Journalism and its subset: opinion Journalism and their illegitimate child: bloviation.
2. Use specific events and examples to illustrate the value of opinion Journalism.
3. Use historical context to analyze the role of modern opinion Journalism and the explosion of bloviation.
4. Evaluate the reliability – or value – of opinion Journalism and bloviation by examining the evidence offered and the logic underlying arguments being made.

These skills relate to course outcomes 5, 4 & 2

Common Errors in Critical Thinking

<p>Denial of the antecedent</p> <p>If it is legal, no one will publish it. It is legal. Therefore, everyone will publish it.</p> <p>What other reasons might explain why no one has published it?</p>	<p>Affirmation of the consequent</p> <p>If it is illegal, no one will publish it. No one has published it. Therefore, it must be illegal.</p> <p>What other reasons might explain why no one has published it?</p>	<p>Question-begging</p> <p>According to President Obama's own words, "the House and the Department of Justice have a very real part of what President Obama is doing."</p> <p>Why is only a very small part of what President Obama is doing?</p>	<p>Reduction to zero</p> <p>All publishing secrets aren't illegal. Some may be legal. Therefore, they should be published. That is why we cannot publish secrets.</p> <p>Why is publishing secrets prohibited and illegal?</p>
<p>Existential fallacy</p> <p>All conservatives are hard to verify. Therefore, since there are conservatives, it is hard to verify all conservatives.</p> <p>What other reasons might make it difficult to verify a group's purity?</p>	<p>The "fallacy" fallacy</p> <p>We haven't proven it's illegal. It's not illegal. Therefore, we should publish it.</p> <p>Why is attempting a fallacy argument not a result for an argument?</p>	<p>Straw-man arguments</p> <p>We must limit the press during war, otherwise we are not fully prepared to battle our enemies.</p> <p>How does this exaggerated position relate to the position at hand?</p>	<p>Elimination</p> <p>If it is not to protect some news, then it is not to protect news. We should not censor it.</p> <p>Why does it not protect news if it is not to protect news?</p>
<p>Bandwagon effect</p> <p>I remember hearing last year that the Democrats had stolen the election. I heard that I heard that in a TV ad.</p> <p>Why are people more likely to spread the message and forget the source?</p>	<p>Confirmation bias</p> <p>I think Democrats help the poor. Democrats helped to end slavery. Welfare must be bad for the poor.</p> <p>Why is it difficult for us to hold any contradictory facts as true?</p>	<p>Bandwagon fallacy</p> <p>We cannot publish secret documents. The network says it's illegal. Therefore, it must be illegal.</p> <p>Why would you trust the advice of someone without other sources?</p>	<p>A confusion of terms</p> <p>Other newspapers published it. Therefore, we shouldn't and it must be secret publishing.</p> <p>Why would a person publish a good reason for it not to be secret?</p>
<p>Examine</p> <p>I am not in favor of tax increases, but the Democrats had a tax-cut bill. I heard that I heard that in a TV ad.</p> <p>Why do we have a different conclusion based on their reasoning or presentation?</p>	<p>Confirmation bias</p> <p>I am certain that Republicans would never increase taxes on the wealthy. I heard an opinion that supports this.</p> <p>Why do we have a tendency to seek out that which confirms our beliefs?</p>	<p>Guilt by association</p> <p>We should not trust tax proposals if they are supported by Republicans. A lot of Republicans are rich.</p> <p>Why would a person's membership affect the quality of their argument?</p>	<p>Ad hominem</p> <p>No one should support the tax plan because it is not supported by the tax-cutters. But it is supported by tax-cutters.</p> <p>Why would a person's attack require the argument for that person?</p>

A Virtual "Wall" Protects Credibility of Neutral Reporting

In print, online, a paper like the New York Times physically separates news coverage from opinion writing, AND those writers are also segregated in the building.

The diagram shows a 'Virtual Wall' separating 'News Reporting' and 'Opinion Journalism'. On the left, under 'News Reporting', there are images of newspaper pages with headlines like 'Boehner Halls Talks on Cuts, and House G.O.P. Cheers'. On the right, under 'Opinion Journalism', there are images of newspaper pages with headlines like 'The White House...'. A red line is drawn across the wall, indicating a clear separation between the two types of writing.

Some Journalists Consider Cable TV Assertion Unethical

Society of Professional Journalists

Code of Ethics: (excerpts)

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News to Opinion

TVspectrum.wmv

