Lecturer Alerts

This lecture is intended to be continued in a subsequent class section. The atmosphere envisioned is a seminar, with students (<u>having read the examples ahead of time</u>) working their way through Workbook examples with their teacher. The point is to begin developing their ability to deconstruct in real time.

After this lecture, students will be able to:

1. Begin to apply key lessons of News Literacy in real time to find or identify reliable information.

2. Use the IMVAIN test of source reliability on the fly.

3. Distinguish, on the fly, between direct and indirect evidence and even spot-check if conclusions are logical or not.
4. Begin to correctly use the terms "Transparency" and "Context" to judge the professionalism of news reporting.
5. Use the Deconstruction Workbook as a means to rehearse detailed and sophisticated judgment of news reports.

These are the capstone skills of this course, encompassing all 6 outcomes promised by the syllabus.

Reminder: Bring Deconstruction Workbook to Recitation, too

Print it.

Read it.

Bring it

'Deconstructing' the News
Is Too Much Texting A Mental Illness?

How to Assess the Reliability of the News

Texting.wmv

Deconstruction: *"Application of News Literacy concepts to the analysis of component parts of a news report in order to dispassionately judge its reliability."*

A Deconstruction Worksheet
How to Judge Reliability

1) Summarize the main points: Does the headline and the lead support the main point(s)?

2) How close does the reporter come to opening the freezer? Is the evidence direct or arm's-length?

A Deconstruction Worksheet
How to Judge Reliability

3) Evaluate the reliability of the sources using I'M VA/IN

4) Does the reporter make his/her work transparent?

5) Does the reporter place the story in context?

A Deconstruction Worksheet
How to Judge Reliability

6) Are the key questions answered?

- Who - What - When - Where? - Why? - How?

7) Is the story fair?

And The Whole Point Is....

What can a news consumer
Do with this information

Is it <u>actionable</u>?

Context & Transparency
Two Ideas Students Struggle With

Predictions   History

The News

Connections   Comparisons

Key Definitions

Main Entry: **con·text** 🔊
Pronunciation: \'kän-ˌtekst\
Function: *noun*

Context: Facts that surround an event or elements of a news story and provide meaning or significance

Deconstructing the News
The power of Context

However, behind the image of two-year-old Jingdan lies a tale not of intentional cruelty but, it seems, one of misplaced love and fear: his sister disappeared from the same spot just two weeks ago.

"I was afraid I would lose him too," their father, Chen Chuanlu, said today.

Context

The New York Times

Education

As College Fees Climb, Aid Does Too

When you look at how much students are actually paying, on average, it is lower, after adjusting for inflation, than five years earlier."

Key Definitions

Main Entry: **trans·par·en·cy**
Pronunciation: \tran(t)s-'per-an(t)-se\
Function: *noun*
Inflected Form(s): *plural* **trans·par·en·cies**
Date: 1591

Transparency: The reporter specifies in the story what he or she *does not* know, and why it could not be learned; how they know what they do know; when the reporter pulls the curtain aside.

TRANSPARENCY

A Source Who
Saw Her Boss
And Fears
Retribution

TRANSPARENCY

*"...lax oversight of the district's credit card, (was) among a series of financial irregularities **outlined in a critical audit** of the Wilton-Lyndeborough School District."*

Deconstructing the News
Transparency is Openness about Methods

- *"Could not be reached"*

- *"Requested anonymity because she feared losing her job"*

- *"A reporter attempted to contact the family at home, but no one came to the door."*

- *"The information could not be independently verified."*

Deconstruction

1) **Summarize the main points of the story**

Deconstructing the News
How Reliable is the Headline?

Tests detect radioactivity on 17 U.S. Navy crew members in Japan

[CNN] — Tests detected low levels of radioactivity on 17 U.S. Navy helicopter crew members when they returned to the USS Ronald Reagan after conducting disaster relief missions in Japan the military said Monday.

No further contamination was detected after the crew members washed with soap and water, the Navy said.

Is the Headline Supported By the Story?

Deconstructing the News
How Reliable is the Headline?

Assaults Plague Campus

On October 17, 2006, Peter Baigent, the Vice President of Student Affairs sent an e-mail to the entire university informing students, staff and faculty of the recent sexual assault of two female students.

According to Douglas Little, Assistant Chief of the Stony Brook Police Department, the two men allegedly involved with the assault are known to the police. Little commented, "Both the Suffolk County police and Stony Brook Police department are working on the case together."

When asked about the safety of the campus community with respect to this recent incident, Little mentioned, "There is no threat to the campus community."

an e-mail to the entire university informing students, staff and faculty of the recent sexual assault of two female students.

The [two] reasons were very transparent and the university has given them 100% support. "Little was unable to provide any information about the location of the attack on campus because of possible violations of the privacy of the two female students."

Aside from this recent incident, students also have the ability to become involved with the pro-active measures set in place by the university to minimize the occurrence of such attacks.

Is the Headline Supported By the Story?

Step 2:
Deconstructing the News

Assess the evidence supporting the main points of the story.

Direct Evidence?
Indirect Evidence?
Are The Inferences Logical?
Did The Reporter Open the Freezer?

The CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR **Direct Evidence**

Mother Jones 47 percent video: Mitt Romney does damage control

Mitt Romney says his remarks were not "elegantly stated" at a fundraiser in Boca Raton, Fla. In the secretly shot video released by Mother Jones, Romney says 47 percent of the people will vote for Obama "no matter what ... who believe that they are victims."

By Ron Thomas, Associated Press / September 18, 2012

"Forty-seven percent of the people who will vote for the president no matter what. All right, there are 47 percent who are with him, who are dependent upon government, who believe that they are victims..."

Mother Jones VIDEO

Step 2:
Deconstructing the News

An Agent, a Green Card, and a Demand for Sex

The 16-minute recording, which the woman first took to The New York Times and then to the Queens district attorney, suggests the vast power of low-level immigration law enforcers, and a growing

Money, not sex, is the more common currency of corruption in immigration, but according to Congressional testimony in 2006 by Michael Maxwell, former director of the agency's internal investigations, more than 3,000 backlogged complaints of employee misconduct had gone uninvestigated for lack of staff, including 528 involving criminal allegations.

Evidence: Did the reporter open the freezer?

Did the reporter open the freezer?

Los Angeles Times

California suppressed consultant's report on inmate suicides

SACRAMENTO — Gov. Jerry Brown has pointed to reams of documents to make the case in court and on the stump that California's prison crisis is over, and inmates are receiving good care.

But there is at least one document the administration wanted to hide.

New court filings reveal that the state suppressed a report from its own consultant, warning that California's prison suicide-watch practices encouraged inmate deaths.

Step 2:
Deconstructing the News

How close did the reporter come to opening the freezer? If not, did a reliable source open it?

What's the Evidence That Sen. Gillibrand Will Run for President?

DAILY NEWS

Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand suddenly on the short list of potential presidential candidates for 2016

Democrat is raising her profile after speech to delegates at Charlotte convention and fund-raising efforts for fellow politicians

BY KENNETH LOVETT | NEW YORK DAILY NEWS

Direct Evidence?
Indirect Evidence?
Inference?

Test Inferences for Soundness

Main Entry: ¹ev·i·dence
Pronunciation: \'e-və-dən(t)s, -və-ˌden(t)s\
Function: noun
Date: 14th century

Main Entry: in·fer·ence
Pronunciation: \'in-f(ə-)rən(t)s, -fern(t)s\
Function: noun
Date: 1594

Evidence: Information that proves or disproves something
Inference: Taking information that is accepted as true and then drawing a conclusion that may or may not be valid

Checking Inferences

The New York Times

Crime Blotter Has a Regular: Yankees Caps

By NANCY FERNANDEZ
Published: September 15, 2010

Deconstructing the News

USA TODAY

Pulling all-nighters earns lower GPAs

Updated 12/14/2007 8:13 AM | Comments 🔲 21 | Recommend 🔲 10

By Michael Virtanen, Associated Press

In Thacher's first study, 85 students said they had pulled one or more all-nighters, and 45 said they hadn't done any. The survey was conducted in Psychology 101 classes, and included students in a variety of majors.

Is The Inference Sturdy?

Step 3:

Deconstructing the News
Evaluate Sources. Are They Reliable?

Step 3:

Evaluate Sources

1) **I**ndependent Sources Are **Better** Than Self-Interested Sources

2) **M**ultiple Sources Are **Better** Than Single Sources

3) Sources Who **V**erify Are **Better** Than Sources Who Assert

4) **A**uthoritative/**I**nformed Sources Are **Better** Than Uninformed Sources

5) **N**amed Sources Are **Better** Than Unnamed Sources

(Mnemonic Device: I'M VAIN)

Deconstructing the News
Evaluate Sources Using IMVAIN

Independence vs. Self-Interest

Eyewitness "Certain" Kimani Gray Was Unarmed When Police Shot Him

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Deconstructing the News
Evaluate Sources Using IMVAIN
Multiple
aka Corroboration

Sources Asserting vs. Verifying

PLO officials call for Arafat inquiry

Trustworthy Anonymous Sources Are Offered to You With:

Transparency
Characterization
Corroboration

Anonymous Sources

Transparent enough?

The Washington Post

Benghazi attack may cloud Clinton's legacy

Characterized enough?

Los Angeles Times

Town hall awaits Obama and Romney

Step 4:
Deconstructing the News
Does the reporter make his or her work transparent?

Key Definitions

Main Entry: **trans·par·en·cy**
Pronunciation: \tran(t)s-ˈper-an(t)-sē\
Function: *noun*
Inflected Form(s): *plural* **trans·par·en·cies**
Date: 1591

Transparency: The reporter specifies in the story what he or she *does not* know, and why it could not be learned; how they know what they do know; when the reporter pulls the curtain aside.

Deconstructing the News
What is the example of transparency?

National Public Radio Reports from Basra

Npr_basra.wmv

Transparency

Teen rape trial shines unwelcome spotlight on Ohio town, football team

CNN Justice

Both boys have been identified by a judge in court, by defense attorneys and in newspapers and other media reports.

CNN is not identifying the girl, who also is a juvenile, in accordance with its policy not to release the names of alleged rape victims.

Deconstructing the News
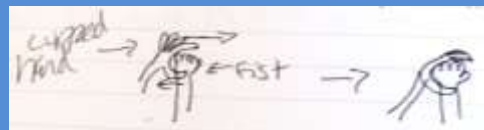### Corrections are Institutional Transparency

The New York Times

Corrections

Step 5:
Deconstructing the News
Does the reporter place the story in context?

Deconstructing the News
Does the reporter put the story in context?
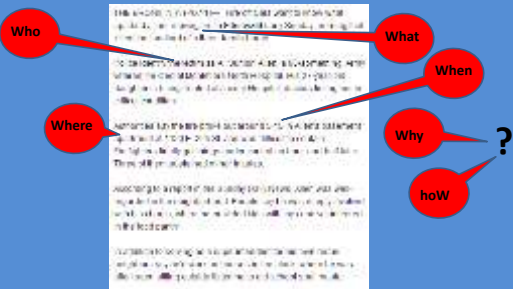
A Car Is Stolen Every 20 Minutes

Nassau and Suffolk are two of New York's 62 counties, but account for 10% of car thefts.

Deconstructing the News
Are the key questions answered?

Who

What

When

Where

Why

?

hoW

GAP Analysis:
Are all Questions Answered?

The New York Times

Bronx Zoo Cobra Found Alive

Updated | 4:51 p.m.

She's been found!

An Egyptian cobra at the Bronx Zoo that had been missing for seven days was discovered "alive and well" on Thursday inside a nonpublic area of the zoo's Reptile House, not far from where she disappeared, said James J. Breheny, the zoo's director.

Deconstructing the News
Are people and their ideas fairly presented?
Is fair language used?

Angels We Have Heard On Harleys
More Than 30,000 Roar With The Gift-giving Spirit
December 9, 1996 By JOSE LAMBIET Staff Writer

SUNRISE – The burly, Harley-riding bikers seemed unlikely Santas.

But the oil-dirty folks with unkempt hair and tattooed arms were filled with the Christmas spirit on Sunday as they roared into Markham Park, more than 30,000 strong, to donate toys to the less fortunate.

The bikers, including members of the infamous Outlaws gang, surrendered donations of tiny stuffed animals, bicycles and Nintendo games to off-duty police officers who had volunteered to work in the eighth annual Christmas Toys in the Sun Run.
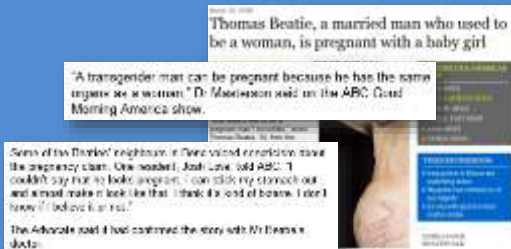
And The Whole Point Is....

What can a news consumer
***Do* with this information**

Is it <u>actionable</u>?

Deconstructing the News
Case Study: The pregnant man story

Assess reliability by Evaluating Sources & Evidence

Deconstructing the News
Case Study: The pregnant man story

Do These Sources Help?

Deconstructing the News
Case Study: The pregnant man story

Does This Sonogram Help?

Deconstructing the News
Case Study: The pregnant man story
Do Baby Photos Help?

Deconstructing the News
How reliable?

Texting.wmv

Deconstructing the News
Weigh sources and evidence

A Deconstruction Worksheet
How to Judge Reliability

1) Summarize the main points: Does the headline and the lead support the main point(s)?

2) How close does the reporter come to opening the freezer? Is the evidence direct or arm's-length?

A Deconstruction Worksheet
How to Judge Reliability

3) Evaluate the reliability of the sources using I'M VA/IN

4) Does the reporter make his/her work transparent?

5) Does the reporter place the story in context?

A Deconstruction Worksheet
How to Judge Reliability

6) Are the key questions answered?

- Who -What -When -Where? -Why? -How?

7) Is the story fair?

And the Whole Point Is...
Is it actionable?

Can you reach a conclusion?

Can you take an action?

Can you make a judgment?

Can you share this information?

Assignments:

1. Bring Deconstruction Workbook to Recitation

2. Writing assignment: "Deconstructing the Washington Post's report on Walter Reed Hospital"

Housekeeping, Announcements & Notes

Countdown
To Test #2

Held in Recitation, Emphasizes Lectures 7-11, (Fairness & Bias through Deconstructing TV News) Same format: 10 questions, 100 points possible.

Thus endeth the Lesson…

Example 4

Afghan investigator: US burning of Qurans was intentional

freep.com

Quran-burning an accident, U.S. tells Afghanistan

KABUL, Afghanistan – The U.S. apologized Tuesday for the burning of Muslim holy books that had been pulled from the shelves of a detention center library adjoining a major base in eastern Afghanistan because they contained extremist messages or inscriptions.

The White House echoed military officials in saying that the burning of Qurans and other Islamic reading material that had been tossed in a pile of garbage was an accident.

Deconstructing the News

An Agent, a Green Card, and a Demand for Sex

The 16-minute recording, which the woman first took to The New York Times and then to the Queens district attorney, suggests the vast power of low-level immigration law enforcers, and a growing desperation on the part of immigrants seeking legal status. The aftermath, which included the arrest of an immigration agent last week, underscores the difficulty and danger of making a complaint, even in the rare case when abuse of power may have been caught on tape.

The Main Points Aren't Always in the First Paragraph

Deconstructing the News
How to Assess Source Authority

Experts Had Long Criticized Potential Weakness in Design of Stricken Reactor

"Not banning them might be the end of nuclear power," said Mr. Lochbaum, a nuclear engineer who spent 17 years working in nuclear facilities, including three that used the G.E. design.

Is the Source Authoritative? Independent?

Why or Why Not?

Deconstructing the News
How to Weigh Sources

Accused G.I. 'Snapped' Under Strain, Official Says
By ERIC SCHMITT and WILLIAM YARDLEY

"When it all comes out, it will be a combination of stress, alcohol and domestic issues — he just snapped," said the official, who has been briefed on the investigation and who spoke on the condition of anonymity because the soldier has not yet been formally charged. His comments drew from accounts of the sergeant's state of mind from two other soldiers with whom he illicitly drank alcohol on the night of the shootings, the official said, and those soldiers face disciplinary action.

Verification or Assertion?

Deconstructing the News
How to Assess Source Reliability

The New York Times

Criticism and Questions Over Plan to Move Macy's
Thanksgiving Parade Out of Times Sq

BY NOAH ROSENBERG
Published March 6, 2011

But some critics are skeptical. A community leader who spoke on the condition of
anonymity to preserve his publicly neutral stance, said he was at a meeting with Macy's
representatives last year, at which the retailer "threatened to move the parade to another
city," unless the route changes were agreed upon.

How Do You Weigh the Anonymous Source?

Does the Headline Match the Story?

Japan to officially celebrate end of US
occupation after WWII

THE VOICE OF RUSSIA

Japan will officially celebrate the end of the US occupation of
the country for the first time since the end of the Second
World War. The government will use the forthcoming event to
galvanize a campaign to revise the post-war constitution.

Prime Minister Shinzo Abe told the MPs earlier today that the
growing number of young people today is unaware that there was a
seven-year long period after the war when Japan was deprived of
sovereignty.

The US officially ended its occupation of Japan on April 28th 1952,
when the San Francisco Peace Treaty between Tokyo and most of
those who formed part of the anti-Nazi Allied Nations took effect.

Voice of Russia, TASS

Asserting vs. Verifying

US jobless rate drops to 7.8% in September

October 08, 2012 | Steven Wishhouse   THIS STORY APPEARED IN The Boston Globe

Jack Welch
@jack_welch

Unbelievable jobs numbers...these Chicago guys will do
anything...can't debate so change numbers

8 Oct 12   Reply   Retweet   Favorite

Boston
Globe

John E. Silvia, chief economist for Wells Fargo & Co. in Charlotte, N.C., said he finds the
employer survey numbers to be more reliable, but that he does not see evidence of a conspiracy
in Friday's report.

He said he suspected September's rise in part-time employment was due to college students
returning to school and taking part-time jobs.

The question that has confounded many economists, he said, is whether the sluggish rate of job
growth that the nation has experienced for the last three years is now the "new normal."

"Things are getting better, the economy is continuing to improve and people are getting jobs,"
Silvia said. "The challenge we all have is the economy's just not growing the way we had
expected."

Find the Context

McClatchy-Marist poll shows Obama
tumbling in voters' eyes

McCLATCHY

At least some of the president's fall to Earth
lies in the fact that voters no longer see him
in the context of an election. He has to stand
alone in the eyes of voters again and doesn't
benefit from the comparison with Republican
rival Mitt Romney.

Another factor in the president's decline is
anxiety about the economy and the country.

The national survey, conducted four months
after Obama was re-elected with 51 percent
of the popular vote, found 45 percent of
voters approving of the way he's handling his
job and 48 percent disapproving.

figure and in the driver's seat. During the
election, it was him versus Romney. Now it's
him versus people's expectations for the
country."

Obama still outpaces Congress by a large
margin.

Deconstruction Step 7: Is it Fair?

NEW YORK POST

Gov rips 'Housewives' hubby

By DAN MANGAN
Last Updated 7:24 AM, March 17, 2011
Posted 1:54 AM, March 17, 2011

The show may be "Real," but his home, apparently, is not.

New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie yesterday suspended -- and demanded the resignation of -- the husband of one of the "Real Housewives of New Jersey" from a water commission, saying he misled officials about his "real" residence.

Christie said Albert Manzo, whose wife, Caroline, is a star of the reality show, had claimed in 2008 -- when he was nominated to serve on the North Jersey Water District Supply Commission -- that he lived in the Brownstone restaurant in Paterson, which he co-owns.

In reality, Christie said, Manzo lives with his wife in Franklin Lakes, in a home featured in episodes of the Bravo reality show.

Manzo maintains the Brownstone is his legal residence and he won't resign.

Deconstructing the News
How Transparent is the Story?

NBCNEWS.com

Who has a better pension: Romney or Obama?

Illinois is infamous for its lavish pension plan for former lawmakers. A Freedom of Information Act request for Obama's pension amount submitted Wednesday to the General Assembly Retirement System of Illinois was not immediately answered, nor was a call to the Obama campaign.

Does the Headline Match the Story?

Columbia Students Are Obsessed With Nutella, Consuming Up To 100 Pounds A Day (UPDATE)

COLLEGE

Does the Headline Match the Story?

Dad Arrested After 2-Year-Old Texas Girl Dies Following Spanking

FOX NEWS

Nicholas Williams was arrested last week after police say he spanked his 2-year-old daughter so hard that she died, MyFoxAustin reports.

According to the arrest affidavit, police and paramedics responded to a 911 call made by a woman saying that the child was not breathing at a residence in Austin, Texas, on May 23.

When police arrived, they found Williams' daughter

The officer began performing CPR and arrived, but an hour later, after being pronounced dead.

An autopsy was performed on the girl the next day. The deputy medical examiner noticed several bruises on the victim's head, face, back, buttocks, chest and arms. The injuries were greatest in the head and buttocks region according to the arrest affidavit. The preliminary cause of death was ruled to be blunt force injuries.

Williams was charged with injury to a child, a first-degree felony.

Deconstructing the News — Where is the Lead?

Deconstructing the News: Inference

Deconstructing the News — How to Weigh Sources

Asserting vs. Verifying

Anonymous Source

US intel sees missile movement in North Korea

US intelligence has seen missile and launch components move to the east coast of North Korea in the "last few days", a US official with direct knowledge of the information tells CNN's Barbara Starr.

The movements are consistent with that of a Musudan missile, the official said. The Musudan missile has a 2,500 mile range and can threaten South Korea, Japan, Guam and southeast Asia.

The US is looking for a hidden North Korean east coast launch site or mobile launchers, the official said, which are of concern because a launch from the east coast would go over Japan.

The official said it is believed such a missile launch would be a "test" launch rather than a targeted strike. That is because it appears the North Koreans have only moved components so far. The U.S. is waiting to see if North Korea issues a notice to its airmen and mariners to stay out of the region.

Is there transparency? Characterization? Corroboration?

Transparency and "Quote Approval"

Deconstruct this story

Evaluate the reliability of sources using the IM/VAIN.

Does the reporter open the freezer?