

Recitation 02 - The Blackout and the Battle Over Information

OBJECTIVE

Today's class has two key objectives: to learn more about where and how students get their news, and their views of the press; to probe their Blackout experiences as a bridge to previewing the CPJ assignment and Lecture #2 on the Battle Over Information

1 Organization

1. Take attendance
2. Review syllabus and Blackboard
3. Remind students that the Blackout is over and they are responsible for following the news closely each week.
4. Collect CPJ homework.

11 Student Attitudes of the Press

Last week we introduced the course. This week let's begin by introducing each other. Go around the room quickly and have each student introduce themselves: name, major and where they get their news.

Put three words on the (real) blackboard: *The News Media*.

Elicit Rorschach-like responses. ASK: What's the first thing that comes to mind when you see these three words? Write it down.

Use comments and student survey data to probe attitudes; use PEW reading assignment to put in the context of national attitudes. While recent surveys find an appreciation for the press' role as a watchdog... *Why are so many people still skeptical or negative about the press in terms of accuracy and bias?* (Shoot the messenger, media clutter and confusion (media vs. news media), amplification of bad news, proliferation of celebrity news/gossip, bad apples in the press, a 24/7 news cycle and rush to judgment, political polarization, etc.).

Probe student encounters with the press. ASK: Any of you ever had an encounter with the press? Tell us about it.

1. Was it a positive or negative experience? Why?
2. Prompt discussion of the role of the press and public perceptions.
3. Segue into student perceptions

ASK: Other than the rare personal encounter with the press, what informs your perceptions? Your parents and friends? TV or film depictions of journalists? Probe the stereotypes.

Is all the skepticism and criticism justified? Tell students that they will make up your own minds by the end of the semester. But...

- Starting today, put away your assumptions.
- Base your conclusions on evidence and critical thinking.
- Support your arguments.

Then ask: How important to think it is to keep up with the news anyway? Bridge to Blackout.

III Blackout Experiences

.Have students recount their blackout experiences. What was the toughest part? What did they miss most? Put key phrases on the blackboard. Read excerpts from some of the more revealing homework assignments if appropriate. What conclusions do the students draw from the experience?

How long could the students have gone before giving up...72 hours, a week, a month?.....

IV. The Blackout on Steroids.

There are whole societies that live in a “perpetual blackout.” Welcome to North Korea. Discussion of CPJ assignment. Gauge reactions. Why do students think leaders suppress news? Why do reporters risk their lives? This is the theme of next week’s lecture.

Review Assignments

Watch clips of CBS foreign correspondent Kimberly Dozier on News Literacy YouTube channel.

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