

# Media Journal

Entries 1 and 2 due by midnight on Friday, February 14

Entries 3-7 due by midnight on Friday, March 28

Issue Area Analysis due by midnight on Friday, May 1

## Purpose

This media journal is designed to prompt you in (1) identifying where you currently receive information about current events, (2) diversifying the sources from which you receive information about current events, (3) assessing how the media you consume frames current events, and (4) leveraging current events as place to apply the concepts learned throughout this course. To achieve all four of these ends, this assignment is divided into four parts: initial review and diversification of habits (Weeks 1-2), practice analyzing individual stories (Weeks 3-7), and recognizing the diverse ways different media sources can treat an on-going issue (Weeks 9-14).

## Initial Review and Diversification (Weeks 1-3)

### *Content and Format*

Together, these two entries should constitute at least three double-spaced pages of writing. I expect thoughtful, thorough responses to each of the bullet points.

- Entry 1: Current media habits:
  - How do you learn about current events? Do you read/watch/follow any particular news sources? Learn about it from friends (in-person, through their social media feeds), etc.?
  - Do you believe you hear from different perspectives in your current media habits? Explain.
  - Consult the [Media Bias Chart 11.0](#) and identify where the outlets you do tend to read/watch/listen to stories from appear (note: this might mean looking at where the stories you come across on social media appear to originate or, if you don't follow any of these sources, providing your own hypothesis for where the sources you do receive news from might fit in the chart). Are there any patterns you can identify?
- Entry 2: Diversifying media habits:
  - From now until week 7, you must routinely be following current events. In this entry, please explain what media outlets you've decided to pay attention to, why you selected these, and how you plan to incorporate them into your regular schedule.
  - If you currently do not pay attention to any sources, I strongly recommend picking at least two sources from the "Middle" columns ringed in green in the Media Bias Chart 11.0. If you currently pay attention to sources clustered toward the right/ left OR clustered in the yellow/orange/red sections of the chart, be sure to select sources that will diversify the content you listen to.

### *Submission Guidelines*

Submit at the appropriate link in Brightspace by midnight on Friday, February 14

### **Practice Analyzing Individual Stories (Weeks 4-8)**

#### *Content and Format*

By Friday, March 28, complete a minimum of 4 entries that use one of the following prompts. Each entry should be a minimum of one double-spaced page.

- Prompt 1: Assess how the particular story has been constructed by answering the following questions:<sup>1</sup>
  - Who created this story?
  - What techniques are used to attract my attention?
  - How might different people understand this story differently?
  - What lifestyles, values, and points of view are represented in, or omitted from, this story?
  - Why was this story published?
- Prompt 2: Apply course concepts to the particular story by answering the following:
  - Summarize the story
  - Explain how a course concept features in or allows you to better understand this story. A strong explanation will include a definition of the particular course concept.
- Note: Each entry must start with a citation for the specific article, podcast, etc. that includes the url. You can find information on how to create these citations [here](#).

### *Submission Guidelines*

Submit at the appropriate link in Brightspace by midnight on Friday, March 28.

### **Analyzing the Framing of a Particular Issue Area (Week 9-15)**

The third stage of the current events journal is an opportunity for you to demonstrate the knowledge that you've gained over the course of this semester while also learning more about the current news coverage of a particular topic. You'll track one issue area across a range of outlets in order to provide an analysis that identifies at least a minimum of three ways the issue is framed. The overall structure of this submission is up to you. Previous students have submitted "traditional" papers, sample podcast

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<sup>1</sup> These questions were adapted from Jeff Share and Elizabeth Thoman's *Teaching Democracy: A Media Literacy Approach* published by the National Center for the Preservation of Democracy and available at [https://www.medialit.org/sites/default/files/D%2BDweb\\_educators\\_guide.pdf](https://www.medialit.org/sites/default/files/D%2BDweb_educators_guide.pdf).

episodes, slide decks, and YouTube videos. Regardless of the format you choose, I'll be evaluating your submission by looking for the following:

### *Content*

- Does it reference a minimum of 8 stories?
- Does it reference a minimum of 3 outlets?
- Framing:
  - Does it describe a minimum of 3 different ways of framing the issue?
  - Does the framing discussion cover both problems and solutions?
  - Is there an analysis of the framing of a specific policy, court case, proposal, etc.?
- Connections to Course Materials:
  - Are there connections to a minimum of three course concepts in a way that demonstrates a substantive knowledge of the material? More credit will be given to connections that demonstrate a clear understanding of the concept or role a particular concept or actor plays in American politics. For example, more credit will be given for connection to negative liberty than to freedom or to the president as “economist-in-chief” rather than just to the office of the president.

### *Quality of Communication*

- Incorporation of Evidence
  - Does the project explicitly and correctly draw on both the course textbook and the selected sources to support all claims (e.g., quotations, paraphrases)?
  - Is all content properly cited?
- Clarity:
  - Regardless of the piece's structure are the claims easy to understand (e.g., word choice, organization, grammar)?

Please note that these are the requirements for what needs to be featured in your final submission. To have 8 stories from 3 outlets that allow you to identify and discuss a minimum of three specific frames, you'll most likely need to read more stories from more outlets so you get to make intentional choices about the stories that will be part of your final project.

### *Submission Guidelines*

Submit at the appropriate link in Brightspace by midnight on Friday, May 1.

### **Concluding Reminders**

Late submissions will receive a penalty of ten points per day (cumulative). I will not accept submission that are more than 5 days late without prior permission.

\*\*Please remember that you may not use any form of A.I. (e.g., ChatGPT) for assignments in this course. If I suspect that you have used A.I. to complete the

assignment, I will substitute an oral exam (a conversation about the content included in your work without notes) for the written assignment.\*\*