Course description

In this course, we will consider the ways in which journalism constructs belief systems and the ways in which it is used to construct beliefs about mainstream culture—all in the service of power. This semester I invite you to read, to study and to learn to think across the lines drawn in the cases we will read by adopting formal concepts of framing, polarization, and ideology. Where controversial points come up—whether Fox News is “real” journalism or not, for example—we will work as a learning community to appreciate all of the perspectives presented. These discussions will lead us to understand the scholarly uses of research theory and methodology in order to locate the ideas we will pursue.

In that sense, the goal of this course is to teach you to move beyond the comfortable confines of opinion to the broader reaches of scholarly understanding. That is why we study the humanities at universities, after all—to learn to consider the world within a community of informed citizens. By the end of the semester based on our practice here in class, I hope that your appetite for political discussions and knowledge will have grown with your developing understanding of the place of journalism in the conflicts of our times with confidence.
Required texts


Readings packet. Also available on ICON under “Electronic Reserve Readings.”

“The Iowa Dozen”

These lectures, discussions, and related writing assignments reflect the School's guiding principles, which are known as “The Iowa Dozen:”

We learn:

1. to write correctly and clearly
2. to conduct research and gather information responsibly
3. to edit and evaluate carefully
4. to use media technologies thoughtfully
5. to apply statistical concepts appropriately

We value:

6. First Amendment principles for all individuals and groups
7. a diverse global community
8. creativity and independence
9. truth, accuracy, fairness and diversity

We explore:

10. mass communication theories and concepts
11. media institutions and practices
12. the role of media in shaping cultures.

COURSE RULES AND GUIDELINES

- **Computer responsibility** — You are responsible for knowing how to use a PC. In all cases, you are expected to maintain **back-up files** of your work. Excuses relating to disk and drive failures will not be accepted. If you lose an assignment due to failure to back up a file, you will be given a “zero.”

- **E-mail** — You must be able to receive e-mail via your “@uiowa.edu” account. Please set other e-mail accounts up to forward messages we send to any other e-mail accounts you use. You will be responsible for any messages you miss, if you do not use this university-assigned address. Class announcements may also be posted on ICON. Check for them regularly.

Comment [CS1]: 1. Write study questions for these days; 2. Select key chapters from each unit; 3. Find YouTube clips of Limbaugh for these chapters: Part I: Obama is destroying the US economy ([www.youtube.com/watch?v=in1AovVzglU](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=in1AovVzglU)) & feature=related); See Part II & III.
• **Studying** — Put sufficient time and attention in preparing your writing assignments. The UI Center for Teaching estimates a 2:1 ratio of time spent studying per hour in class. Take adequate notes in lecture. If you miss a lecture, get the notes from a classmate, preferably someone in your discussion section. I also recommend taking concise reading notes of the assigned readings before lectures.

• **Discussion section preparation** — To be counted present in each of these meetings — which count for 20 percent (200/1000 points) of your total course grade — you must come to class prepared to turn in any written homework assigned. Your work will be accepted on a pass-fail basis. Note: Insufficient or incorrect effort on your homework may still result in a failing grade. Homework will not be accepted after section meetings or by e-mail under ordinary circumstances.

• **Submitting written assignments** — You will submit your note-taking assignment and historical interview (see below) to the dropbox on your section’s ICON site by 8 a.m. on the date when the assignment is due. This will allow the papers to be scanned by the anti-plagiarism software, Turnitin.com.

• **Unethical conduct.** We use Turnitin.com to find out whether your papers are original. Webster's New World Dictionary defines "plagiarize" as "to take ideas, writings, etc., from another and pass them off as one's own." The University provides penalties for plagiarism ranging from grade reduction to dismissal from the University. We will learn how to research and write papers and tests correctly to avoid even accidental plagiarism. If you are in doubt as to whether you may be plagiarizing, ask for help from your section leader. For more details of definitions of cheating, procedures and penalties, see the University's detailed definitions of academic misconduct may be found in the Student Academic Handbook of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, at www.clas.uiowa.edu/students/academic_handbook/ix.shtml.

• **Meet your deadlines.** Late papers will be marked down one letter grade per day, after they have been graded. Thus, a “C” paper that is two days late will receive an “F.” NO paper will be accepted late unless you have notified your discussion section leader in advance with an explanation. No paper will be accepted more than three weekdays after it's due.

• **Office hours.** Office hours are for you. The University requires us to hold them, but they are for your benefit. And we — your TAs and I — are in favor of that. If you come by during our office hours, you can learn about the course, its content and study strategies. Make it a project to visit office hours once before mid-term.
• **Attendance is not optional.** Except in cases of a death in the family, your serious illness, or other genuine emergencies or crises, you are expected to attend all lecture and section meetings. If you must miss a class, notify your TA in person or by e-mail in advance. If extenuating circumstances make advance notice impossible, you must provide a written explanation of your absence as soon as possible. Depending on the circumstances, you may still lose credit for missing the section, which will lower your course grade.

Missing the classes immediately before and after a scheduled holiday will not be excused. Make your travel (or grade-based) plans accordingly.

• **Make-up work.** Except in exceptional and documented situations, all make-up work (arranged prior to your absence) must be completed within two (2) calendar weeks of the set due date or the grade reverts to a zero. See your section leader to authorize such work.

• **Arriving to class late/leaving class early.** This is disruptive and inappropriate behavior. If other classes or obligations overlap with the times scheduled for this course, rearrange the other matters or drop this course. The same holds for discussion sections.

• **Sleeping/text-messaging/talking/doing the crossword puzzle in the DI during class:** I know that you are bombarded with distractions here on campus. But you should focus when you are in my classroom. Perk up! Put the phone away! Take notes! Ask questions! Learn something!

  o **Reacting Safely to Severe Weather.** If severe weather is indicated by the UI outdoor warning system, class members will seek shelter in the innermost part of the building, if possible at the lowest level, staying clear of windows and of free-standing expanses which might prove unstable. The class will resume after the severe weather has ended.

• **Special accommodations.** I need to hear from anyone who has a disability, which may require some modification of seating, testing or other class requirements so that appropriate arrangements may be made. Please contact me during my office hours, by e-mail or after class. Special academic arrangements for students with disabilities are handled with the cooperation of Student Disability Services, 133 Burge Hall, ph. 335-1462. Students who feel they need special accommodations for any aspect of the course are encouraged to contact SDS and to speak with the instructor and/or TAs early in the semester.
- **Final grades and the “curve?”** Final grades are scored on a whole letter basis only. There are no pluses, minuses. And there is no curve. Because of the built-in curve shown on the grading scale—all grades automatically round-up to the next letter grade break if they are at .5 or higher—no grades will be raised.

- **Conflict resolution.** The instructor and section leaders are open to hearing student concerns related to the course. We are eager to work with you to resolve conflicts or misunderstandings. In fact, even though this may be difficult for you, we encourage you to resolve conflicts with us directly. If you feel uncomfortable bringing a concern to your section leader, you may consult the following university authorities in the following order: Dr. Frank Durham, associate professor and associate director of the School of Journalism and Mass Communication; Dr. David Perlmutter, director of the School of Journalism and Mass Communication; Dr. Helena Dettmer, Interim Assoc. Dean for Academic Programs in CLAS; the University Ombudspersons. For more information, see the CLAS Student Academic Handbook at: [www.clas.uiowa.edu/students/academic_handbook/ix.shtml](http://www.clas.uiowa.edu/students/academic_handbook/ix.shtml).

- **Sexual harassment policy** — Sexual harassment subverts the mission of the University and threatens the well-being of students, faculty, and staff. All members of the UI community have a responsibility to uphold this mission and to contribute to a safe environment that enhances learning. Incidents of sexual harassment should be reported immediately. See the UI Comprehensive Guide on Sexual Harassment at [www.uiowa.edu/~eod/policies/sexual-harassment-guide/index.html](http://www.uiowa.edu/~eod/policies/sexual-harassment-guide/index.html) for assistance, definitions, and the full University policy. Report any concerns to Prof. Durham or Director David Perlmutter (AJB 305).
Critical Dates and Grades

Graded exercises

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<th>Activity</th>
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<td>Quizzes</td>
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<td>20</td>
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<td>(10 @ 2 points ea.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mid-term</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>March 8(^1)</td>
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<td>Extra credit</td>
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<td>April 4</td>
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*Kathleen Hall Jamieson will speak at 101 Becker at 7 p.m.*

Final essay

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Class participation (attendance & discussion) 20

Total 100

Grading scale for individual assignments

This grade scale rounds all grades up from the half-point below the regular grade cutoff. Note: This scale is firm. I will not raise or otherwise improve grades that fall below the numbers posted here.

A     above 89.5
B     above 79.5
C     above 69.5
D     above 59.5
F     below 59.4

\(^1\) Because the university schedules a full week for break, I will only give this exam as scheduled, except in the case of illness or personal crisis. (Not extended vacation time.)
Jan. 17  First day of class

Introduction to the course

A. Syllabus review—Reading the course description

B. Developing survival skills for this course

C. Roll call.

Unit One: Traditional meaning construction—media framing

Jan. 19  In-class A-V Part 1: “Shut Up & Sing” — The Dixie Chicks (DVD—93 mins.)

Please pay attention and take notes on the following points in the film:

• What she said and when and where
• The stage the war was at then
• How it was reported in the media
• How this is depicted in the film
• What the public reaction was and how it was acted out
• How the resulting fury presented a context out which various frames were possible (These will be what we will look for in the exercise that follows.)
• Other impressions about how this became a media firestorm
• The date of Maines’ statement (you’ll need this to search for related news stories)

Jan. 24  In-class A-V Part 2: “Shut Up & Sing” — The Dixie Chicks (DVD—93 mins.)

Jan. 26  Discussion of “Shut up and Sing” for examples of ideological framing.

Feb. 2  Chapter Three of Frontline’s “Hot Politics” about the reframing of “global warming” and the role of corporate and government sources in that framing process. (Use Windows Media Player on the PC.)

Five-minute write/discussion.


  o Chapter Four: “Journalism of verification,” pp. 70-93

  o Chapter Five: “Independence from faction.”
Unit Two:  Media Polarization


Feb. 16  Video: “Outfoxed” Part 1 (78 minutes)

Feb. 21  Video: “Outfoxed,” part 2; discussion.


Video: Amy Goodman interview with David Barstow on his expose´
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OlZ-sKavUjU

Video: The Media Project —
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FFYY8xgWlhU


Video: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zz-OjwiojSM

Comment [ul2]: Notes re: Conway et al.:
(a) In addition to reading the article, please read the summary of this article at:
newsinfo.iu.edu/news/page/norma/5535.html

(b) Please look at this additional link for a summary of the charts and tables that accompany the article:
journalism.indiana.edu/papers/oreilly.html

Comment [SC3]: Include hardcopies of all of these in packet.


June 11, 2010. from www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/05/03/AR2006050300865.html

Video: Interview with Iyengar (What is the role of negative campaigning in partisanship?) http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2dvlHv6qPKo

(cont.)

Assignment for next class: Read the “Political Typology discussion” at: http://www.people-press.org/2011/05/04/beyond-red-vs-blue-the-political-typology/

After reading the typology definitions, go to the Pew Research Center to take the “Political Typology” quiz at http://www.people-press.org/typology/quiz/?src=typology-report

Bring your printed score, “See where you fit.” You don’t have to reveal your identity, but we will discuss the quiz as a way to validate the Red State-Blue State concept presented in the readings.

March 6 Exam review
March 8 Mid-term exam²

March 13, 15 — Spring Break

March 20 Jamieson & Cappella: Echo Chamber: Rush Limbaugh and the Conservative Media Establishment

Preface, Chapters 1-2

Daily Clip: PBS News Hour: Talk Radio: (11 mins.)
http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/media/july-dec09/talkers_11-04.html

March 22 Jamieson & Cappella: Echo Chamber, Chapter 3


² Because the university schedules a full week for break, I will only give this exam as scheduled, except in the case of illness or personal crisis. (Not extended vacation time.)
Daily Clip: Father Coughlin: www.youtube.com/watch?v=1S9_gqCytV4

**March 29**  Jamieson & Cappella: *Echo Chamber*, Chapters 4-5

Video: re: “The enemy as unifying force:”  http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vpURNZHzOl4&feature=fvsr

**April 3**  Jamieson & Cappella: *Echo Chamber*, Chapters 7-8

**April 5**  Jamieson & Cappella: *Echo Chamber*, Chapters 9-10

**April 10**  Discussion day.

**April 12**  Jamieson & Cappella: *Echo Chamber*, Chapters 11-12

**April 17**  Jamieson & Cappella: *Echo Chamber*, Chapters 13-14

**April 19**  Discussion day.

**Unit Three: Tying It All Together**

**April 24**  Discussion to link framing and polarization concepts together.

**April 26**  No class: See me during extended office hours

**May 1**  No class: See me during extended office hours

**May 3**  Final essays due. Answer the question: “Echo chamber: Cause for concern or celebration?”
Study Guide

Note: These question sets and notes are presented in order to direct your attention to the points that I expect you to be able to answer in class discussions, on quizzes and the mid-term and in your final essay. They are extensive, but not exhaustive or exclusive. Please prepare your daily readings based on these points, while adding your own questions and ideas.


1. What does Nesbit say framing is for? (p. 76)

2. What is the predominant frame of Blacks in news coverage of race?

3. Nesbit presents three frames in Table 3.2 on p. 67. What are they? Re-read them to answer why they are apparently more or less likely to succeed.

4. Why is news less likely to persuade viewers (and readers) of a policy-related frame’s validity?

5. What is the role of prior knowledge in framing? The role of beliefs?

6. What is a constructionist framing approach? (p. 47-48)

7. How does the text suggest making global warming a more palatable frame to Americans? Does this seem plausible to you?

8. What is the “emotional home run?” (p. 53)

9. What is “fragmented media?”

10. What has the framing strategy for global warming been until recently? Why has it failed?

11. Cite an example of a “liberal alarm.” (p. 55)

12. What is a “cognitive miser?” (p. 51)
13. Overall, what is the goal of framing?
   a. By news organizations?
   b. By advocacy groups?
   c. By corporations?

Nesbit is:
   • Advocating the strategic use of framing
   • Advocating policy over individualism (problematic)
   • Showing that resonances matter, e.g. the “emotional homerun” as a business/capital-based appeal to conservatives on global warming (p. 53).
   This is as opposed to “public accountability” and the “war on science” (pp. 55-56). Also in E.O. Wilson’s atheistic link to Christians over environmentalism (pp. 57-58).
     o How do Gamson’s “packages” work here?
   • How does the core ideology of individualism play in the framing contest over poverty? (p. 61).
     o News reports focus on the individual, rather than the structural aspects of the issue.
     o They tend to be event-centered or “episodic” (Iyengar, 1991), rather than more process-driven.
     o News consumers tend to reduce issues like poverty to “responsibility and blame” (p. 63).
• This produces a conservative attitude against Blacks and the poor, where Blacks are over-represented in the media as poor.
• Why won’t the “responsible economic planning” frame work? (p. 69)

For discussion:

1. Which of the definitions on pp. 10-11 best applies to “Shut Up and Sing?” Consider these examples:
   • The Toby Keith episode
   • The Saddam/Natalie Maines CD cover
   • The Memphis concert—signs “Move to France”
   • The S. Carolina concert crowd outside the auditorium
   • Another example

   Note to students in class: Feel free to show us the clip you have in mind.

2. With reference to the film, what does your definition (or definitions) do for social meaning?

3. How is the framing process an expression of power in the movie? Politically? Economically?

4. What is the difference between “cognitive” and “cultural” framing? Which is dominant in the Dixie Chicks’ story? He uses slogans as frames. Which examples can you call from the film like that? Were they cultural or cognitive?

   See freerepublic.com for a set of examples.
5. Describe the “principle” that was contested in the Dixie Chicks’ story. How was it a “frame?” Give examples.
6. According to Entman (p. 14), frames must be shared to be meaningful. Because they can be located “within media discourse, within individuals, and within social and cultural practices,” how do you think framing works? What is the role of framing in journalism? With reference to the initial problem (Maines’ statement at Sheperd’s Bush), how were various frames parts of a “chain of signification?” (p. 15) How was this shown in the film? What does it mean to invoke a frame for an “occurrence!”

7. A simpler version of this question is “what makes a frame ‘work?’” (p. 15)


9. Did it provoke just one frame? Why not? Which ones emerged?

10. Frames are more general than specific events. (See “principle.”) How were the counter-frames in this film symbolic and, therefore, more general than the inciting event? Gamson and Modigliani (1989) identify five “framing ‘devices’:”

   - Metaphors
   - Catchphrases
   - Exemplars
   - Depictions
   - Visual images

   Based on these devices, what were some of the symbols in the reactions shown?

11. “Frames structure.” (p. 17) What does Steve Reese mean by this shortest sentence in scholarly writing? (What kinds of structures do we get from Gamson & Modigliani’s five-point criteria, for example? From Entman’s definition of frames as “including certain information and excluding others?” From Gamson’s “packages” of cultural information? Or others?)
12. Polarization is a function of framing. (See p. 19). How are oppositional frames connected to each other in this case? How can this lead to a “misguided form of ‘balance’” in the news?

13. Framing creates “contestation” of social meanings. Reese says that “frames are connected to asymmetrical interests.” What does he mean by that?

14. He adds, “The power to frame depends on access to resources, a store of knowledge and strategic alliances.” Give what you have read her, how can a frame be a “resource?” (p. 20)

p. 7

Frame — (def. 1) “an active process and a result.”

p. 9

Framing (def. 2) as part of “agenda-setting”

“The way information is structured affects cognitive processing…”

“…and audience schemata interact with texts to determine the ultimate meaning derived from them.” (Draw a picture.)

Q. How does this concept of reporter-audience interaction represent the role of the journalist in constructing “bias” or “ideological subjectivity?”

“Power” – Reese presents “framing as an exercise in power” (p. 10). Where is the power situated in that theoretical construction? (Draw a picture.)

Reese writes, “I am willing to grant the agenda-setting hypothesis as a basic premise—that media structure, if not dictate, the way the public thinks about its second-hand information.”

Read aloud rest of par. 2 on p. 9. — This gives us a way to conceptualize “bias” better.
Frames (def. 3) as excluding some information and including others. READ DEFS. FROM P. 10 ALOUD.

pp. 10-11

p. 11 — Frames as “organizing principles”

(def. 4) — “Frames are organizing principles that are socially shared and persistent over time, that work symbolically to meaningfully structure the social world.”

p. 13

(def. 5) — Frames as “themes.”

p. 14 Where are frames (and themes) located?

• Within individuals
• Within social and cultural practices — including journalism.
• As a moment within a “chain of signification.”
What is a “chain of signification?” (The daily news cycle and the news reports it produces.)

Frames are historical, i.e. “persistent,” “powerful” but not permanent:

Rather, because they are ideological, they emerge from a competitive context. If frames represent “principles,” whose principles determined the frame?

Raymond Williams described “emergent” and “dominant” ideologies in a way that shows that contradictory belief systems are often present together and are often in competition and often define themselves versus each other, e.g.

- pro-war and anti-war ideology
- environmental frames (pro- and anti-)
- pro-booze culture and anti-booze culture on campus.
- American beliefs and attitudes toward immigration

Ask for discussion on these points. Are there others?

Show:

www.people-press.org/reports/

— See news impact on knowledge and on global warming.

Return to the Highlander question:

- What is the difference between “bias” as a deviation from “objective” truth and the frame as ideological?
- The concept of “bias” assumes that there is a point from which meaning or “truth” can vary.
- By contrast, “ideology” represents a belief system that is socially held and reconstructed through the process of framing.
Kovach & Rosensteil, Chapter Five

Following “OutFoxed” we will discuss these questions:

1. How closely to Gallagher’s three criteria for objectivity do these examples come (p. 96)?
   - “an ultimate commitment to the truth”
   - “a high obligation to be fair to those with whom one disagrees”
   - “distance from faction”

   Add to this the fourth principle: “dedication to accuracy, verification, the larger public interest, and a desire to inform that all other journalists subscribe to” (p. 97).

2. Do these journalists demonstrate what Gallagher calls “independence” (p. 96)?

3. How does Fox News compare to this standard, based on “OutFoxed”?

4. Who is George Will and how is he presented as an example of a lack of independence?

5. What is the “journalism of opinion?” Name examples of opinion journalists from the text. How is Fox characterized here? (p. 102).

6. What does Anthony Lewis say about “provocateurs,” a group that includes Bill O’Reilly?

7. What happened to partisan loyalty in journalism? And what took its place? (See p. 99.)
   - If you are a journalist, are you registered to vote?
   - Would you participate in a protest rally against a public figure you were also going to report on?
   - What price might you pay for such behavior?
   - What are the risks of being too removed from society? (See pp. 101-102).

5. What would the word, “transparency,” add to our understanding (of the moral of) the George Will story on pp. 100-101?

6. What do the authors say about the Fox News operation?
7. Is there a class divide between journalists and their audiences? If so, why?

8. What is the role of “diversity” in the production of objective news, according to the authors? (What does the “women’s vote” mean, for example, in the current election? Is there such a thing?)

9. How do we reconcile our personal positions (racial, gendered, sexual identity, partisan, urban or rural, etc.) with the need to produce news that is broadly representative?

- Father Coughlin — Who was he?
- The Institute for Propaganda Analysis (IPA) — define? When did they work?
- Propaganda — define
- Fear appeals — How do they work? How do they correspond to journalistic principles of verification, transparency, and objectivity? What is the role of good and evil in them?
- Talking Points memo (Show an example) — Why did the researchers focus on this segment of his show?

Seven propaganda devices: Name calling
  glittering generalities
  transfer
  testimonial
  plain folks
  card stacking
  band wagon

- Which techniques did O’Reilly use most? (See Table 1 on p. 206.)
- How does this analysis of O’Reilly’s work compare to the standards set for “journalism” by K&R? Is O’Reilly a journalist? Why is that unclear?
• How do the seven propaganda devices approximate framing? Refer to your notes on Reese’s prologue to identify a definition of “frame” or “framing” that works. Explain your choice.

• How does O'Reilly typify the world in terms of “villains,” “the virtuous,” and “victims?” See p.

• How does O'Reilly compare to Coughlin by this analysis? (See p. 215.)
Where are the sources of bias in the following?

- The “flywheel”
- The “tenuous status of accountability issues in the news”—which questions does it raise?
- The role of the Fourth Estate under the Bush administration
- The role of the press in government under the Bush administration. How was/is it co-opted by the administration?
- The impact of self-imposed rules of journalism on the role of the Fourth estate under this administration
- The “core principle of the mainstream press” (p. 49)
- Indexing
- What is the role of facts vs. power in establishing an official story (p. 50)?
- Why don’t outsiders make the news with contradictory stories often?
- Why did the news avoid considerations of the president’s legal culpability in the investigation of the government’s use of torture?
- How do the authors explain the frame of the “liberal press” (p. 53)?
- Which direction does the press’s relationship with those in power go? Who influences whom?
- How is the reporter-source relationship in the national press corps comparable to that of the finance press?
- Where is Fox News in this mix?
- Which framing catchphrases has the administration used to discredit reports challenging their stories about torture or the war?
- What happened to those stories? (p. 57)
- What is the difference between governing and managing the press? (p. 58)
• What is an information “cascade” (def., Entman)?
• How were “media mastery” and “press independence” correlated in the author’s
discussion on p. 61?
• How did these factors influence the news?
  • …technology?
  • …leaks and independence?
  • …outsider counter-spin?
• What enabled the level of press independence seen in coverage of Hurricane
  Katrina?

Names to know:
• Abu Gharaib
• Guantanamo Bay
• The National Security Administration

- According to Bennett et al., why should this story have never appeared?
- Why might it have sunk without a trace?
- What was the point of the Pentagon’s effort here?
- Who was the informant in this story?
- How well did the networks understand their source’s consulting positions?
- What is the basis of the Times’ evidence?
- How does the article support Bennett’s description of the administration’s management of the mainstream press? How is it different?
- What are “message force multipliers” or “surrogates?”
- Why was this a propaganda effort?
- How does this story depict the “flywheel?”
- Why did the press “fail,” according to Bennett and in this story?
- What might the role of “resource depletion” be in this story? How might that play to the Pentagon’s advantage in its strategy?
- What is the Pentagon’s and the Bush administration’s assumption about the role of the press in the loss of the Vietnam war? In the trend toward loss of the War in Iraq? How did they try to repair that broad perception?

p. 223
- Do mass media cause polarization or report it?
- Explain the theory that I applied to the Bristol Palin/FNC case.
- Setting notion of causality aside (we must), how would the mass media be “engines of polarization?” Can you refer to our discussions about Fox here?

p. 224
- What is the research question for this piece?
- How does Mutz suggest that media might be leading the polarization process?
  - More outlets—“increased number of choices”
  - “expansion of entertainment media”
- What is the limitation of the “more choices” argument? How can more choices limit social cohesion or unity?

p. 225
- What is the role of “selectivity” or “selective perception” in this? Can you see that we are talking about “fragmentation?”
- What is cognitive dissonance? Who was Leon Festinger? Paul Lazarsfeld?

pp. 225-226
- What is the role of “influence” as in the discussion of the partisan press here? How can it work together with selectivity? Give the text’s explanation.

pp. 226-227
- What comes first: the media or the audience? What about Fox News?

pp. 227
- Why is there “heightened concern about mass media’s role in polarization?”

pp. 228
- What does figure 5-1 mean on p. 228?
Which partisans are most likely to selectively expose themselves to partisan media?

What happened to Republican newspaper readers in the 1990s?

What did Iyengar & Morin find in their study? (We’ll read this next, I think.)

What does selectivity have to do with polarization? balkanization? media fragmentation? What is the difference?

Are we headed for more or less of this?

Is such fragmentation new?

Does Mutz think that selectivity and polarization would decrease if Republicans and Democrats exposed themselves evenly to all perspectives in the media? What would selective perception mean to their understanding?

If the underlying assumption in much work on information processing is that if people were truly unbiased processors of the same political information, they should ultimately converge in their judgments, then why doesn’t that happen?

- In terms of the centered/de-centered or modernist/post-modernist concepts I presented yesterday, why is this an issue?

What are the limitations placed by individuals on the media re: political polarization?

How do search engines on the Internet reinforce selectivity?

What is the role of the entertainment media in widening the gap between the politically informed and the uninformed?

Why does it matter?
What is “byproduct learning?” What did this produce?
What is its impact on voting patterns?

What is “relative entertainment preference?”
How would the Daily Show or The Colbert Report compare to this concept?

Are we “addicted to choice?” What does this mean to political literacy and the media’s role in it?

What is wrong with “game-centered coverage” of political campaigns?
From the perspective of polarization, why is the rise in this kind of coverage a concern?

What is “bracketing” (also “indexing”) and how does Mutz explain its contribution to polarization?

How does uncivil discourse increase polarization?

Why is polarizing television popular?
Can political television affect the way people react?
How does civility work?
Why might civil political programming fail to attract an audience?

Why is Bill O’Reilly popular?

What are the research questions here? How is the article organized? What are the parts and how do they work together?

p. 19
- What is the standard explanation of polarized politics?
- What are alternative explanations for polarization? based on the media’s role? Based on candidates’ positions?

p. 20
- What evidence do the authors offer to counter these points?
- What is the role of media in this polarization trend?

p. 21
- What was “objective” or “neutral” about the 20th c. form of media?
- In the “hostile media phenomenon,” how have partisan viewers been likely to rate mainstream media? (How does Fox encourage this?)

p. 22
- How have partisans reacted to this “hostile bias in the mainstream media environment? Which media have each side turned to?
- What is the “new media environment?”
- Is it slanted as charged?
- How do the authors describe Fox News in this context?

p. 23
- Which method did they use to answer their questions?

p. 24
- What were their hypotheses?

p. 25
- What did their analysis show re: the statistical model for randomization?
- What did the Fox label show?
p. 28
- What evidence of selective exposure did the study show?

p. 32
- Will a Democrat refer to a Fox story on vacation destinations? Why or why not?
- Did liberals converge on a single non-Fox source?

p. 33
- How does soft news fare in this context?
- What does competition force newspapers to do ideologically?

p. 34
- What is the trend for media content and polarization?
- What is the “echo chamber” effect?
- Do Internet-based media contribute to polarization? How?

Same story in popular form: Red Media, Blue Media — Iyengar & Morin, Washington Post
Jamieson & Cappella: *Echo Chamber: Rush Limbaugh and the Conservative Media Establishment*

*Echo Chamber, Chapter 1: How the conservative media attack the Democratic opposition*

p. 1
- What is the importance of Rush Limbaugh to conservative media?

p. 2
- Which media do the authors focus on here? Why?
- Which media reflect the mainstream media?
- Do the authors examine their “liberal” status?

p. 6
- Which three sets of competing frames did the media develop around the Kerry-Bush conflict? How did FNC differ from the mainstream here?
- What are the underlying assumptions behind each side’s frames?
- How did a lack of verifiable sources in Kerry’s story open this up to both sides?

p. 10
- Which side worked for Kerry’s advantage? Which worked against him?

p. 11
- How did the polarized frames differ?

pp. 13-14
- How the language of framing vary? Why?

pp. 14-15
- What is the “conservative opinion media?”
- How did it marginalize Kerry?
- What was Limbaugh’s trope (assumption) about criticizing U.S. policy?
- Who were the Swift Boat Veterans for Truth (SBVT)?

pp. 16-19
- What did the use of “extreme hypotheticals” produce for Limbaugh?
- Which assumptions about Democrats underlie the conservative media’s “coherent” interpretations of the meanings of events?
- What is the difference between the way the FNC and ABC framed Kerry's encounter with Cedric Brown?
- How did the other media (The Journal and the Fox News Web site) cover the encounter?
- What is the “feedback loop?” How is that different from the alleged “Republican transmission belt” described on p. 4?

**Echo Chamber, Chapter 2: How the conservative media defend conservatism**

pp. 21-28

- How do the conservative media assert that the liberal media employ a “double-standard?”
- How do the authors summarize the (polarizing) tactics of conservative media on p. 20?
- How do the authors define the conservative strategy (p. 20)?
- What was the Lott story? How did it surface?
- Which conservative media defended Lott? How? (p. 22)
- How does this moment show Limbaugh’s influence?
- What was the “double-standard” alleged by Sean Hannity about Al Gore’s father with ref. to Trent Lott? Or about William Fullbright re: Bill Clinton (p. 26?) or Robert Byrd (p. 28)?
- What was the “cascade of evidence”

pp. 29-31

- What is “compartmentalized rhetoric?” (p. 29). How does Limbaugh use it?
- How does this approach muddy the comparison of Trent Lott’s embrace of Strom Thurmond as a segregationist in contemporary terms versus various historical examples?
- How does this fit with Limbaugh’s position on affirmative action?

pp. 32-38

- How did Limbaugh and others turn on Lott? Why?
Did CBS or NBC quote sources repeating the dominant conservative position that the attack on Lott was hypocritical (p. 37)? Why not? How does this explain the difference between the conservative and the “liberal” media?

Which two frames did Limbaugh offer to counter the appearance of Lott and republicans as racists?

What was the role of the conservative media in this counter-attack? Which media?

How did the Journal shelter its readers from the dominant frame?

What is a “conservative knowledge enclave?” (How is this a form of polarization? pp. 39-41)

What are the two “all-purpose lines of argument that can be deployed in virtually any situation?” How are these expressions of the “liberal mainstream media” frame?

**Echo Chamber, Chapter 3: Conservative Opinion Media: The Players**

What are the three main outlets here?

How are they linked?

How have mainstream and conservative media drawn talent from the two parties?

Who owns Fox News? And the Wall Street Journal?

What are some of the other conservative media outlets (p. 44)?

How did political talk radio develop?

Why was the end of the Fairness Doctrine key to its success?

What is Rush Limbaugh’s relationship to the Republican Party (p. 46)?

When did Fox News begin broadcasting on television?

How many people watch Fox daily vs. other cable news networks? (p. 48)

How are the tag lines “Fair and Balanced” and “We report; you decide” described on p. 49?

The Wall Street Journal pegs its editorial position to its position to the New Deal and the “welfare state.” What are they?
• How did the *Journal* support welfare reform under Clinton?
Echo Chamber, Chapter 4: The Conservative Opinion Media as Opponents of Liberalism and Custodians of the Reagan Narrative

pp. 56-66
- What role does focusing on enemies play in conservative media?
- Which other reading of ours labels this as the use of “fear appeals?”
- How are the typical enemies characterized?
  - Liberals
  - Communism
  - IslamoFascism
  - The cultural “Liberal” elite as enemy
- The conservative media are not unified on all issues. How do Limbaugh and the Journal differ on immigration? Abortion?

pp. 67-71
- What is Reagan’s iconic function for Republicans?
- How do his policies and ideology give the a conservative media a creed and a doctrine?
- How do Reagan and Roosevelt serve as touchstone of partisan revisions of American history? What does the mean in contemporary terms?

pp. 72-74
- How do the conservative “base” regard the mainstream media in the culture war that cycles through the opinion media?
- What is the role of Reagan conservatism in this?
- Who is the out-group here? The in-group?

Chapter 5, “Effects of an Echo Chamber”

pp. 75-80
- How do selective exposure, selective perception, and selective retention work together?
- How do these concepts add up to an “echo chamber?”
- How do different opinion media outlets reinforce each other?
- What does the notion of the “Establishment” media have to do with this process?
- Why did the authors study Limbaugh, Fox, and the *Journal*?

**pp. 80-85**
- What are the “priming” effects of the conservative media?
- Following Slater’s theory—which proposes ways to think of the effects of media in other than linear terms—what does the concept of the “reinforcing spirals framework” mean regarding the interaction of media effects and media exposure?
- What are “spirals of effects?”
- Is this a “perfectly closed system?” Or is it “increasingly open or closed in the face of more media outlets with more varied media content?”
- Does social identity reflect the content of media one consumes? (Can Fox make you a conservative?)

**pp. 85-90**
- Explain the data sources presented here?
  - Which methods were used?
  - What was the point of each? (What did each show?)
  - Who was surveyed in each?
  - Which materials were they given?
  - What did they find across these studies? Re: the echo chamber? Re: selectivity?
Chapter 6, “Speaking to the Republican Base: An Analysis of Conservative Media’s Audience”

- Who is in the “Republican base?”
- How do the authors describe them? (See the subheadings.)
- What does this demographic profile suggest to you about the “spirals of effects?”

Chapter 7, “Vetting Candidates for Office”

- What is the role of the opinion media in vetting candidates for office?
- How did Limbaugh exercise his power to vet the candidates listed?
- What made the Schwarzenegger case different? How did Limbaugh resolve it?
- What was the ideological gold standard for Limbaugh’s judging these candidates?
- How do the conservative opinion media led by Limbaugh perform “a third party-like function by reinforcing political identity?”
- How can the authors be sure?

Chapter 8, “Stirring Emotion to Mobilize Engagement”

- Do Limbaugh’s attacks lead listeners to mistrust the political process?
- What would a “no” to that question mean for Limbaugh’s role?
- How do Limbaugh’s listeners score on a survey of trust in government? See fig. 8.1.
- What kind of mistrust do they express?
- Is mistrust the same as indifference? How do J&C know?
- How do Limbaugh listeners compare to other kinds of media consumers? See fig. 8.3.
- Were Limbaugh listeners more or less involved in the 1996 election than other groups?
- How does Limbaugh’s content vary from the mainstream media? (p.133)
- What is the role of the production of anger in the definition of the “double standard?”
- ...and “moral outrage” at the behavior of Democrats?
- How do Limbaugh listeners differ from other PTR groups in the quality of their emotion?
- What is the association between emotion and political participation? Voting?
- What does the chapter summary say about this?

Suggested reading: Jackson Katz on Howie Carr/talk radio —
http://www.huffingtonpost.com/jackson-katz/romney-trawls-for-white-w_b_1187146.html?view=print&comm_ref=false
Chapter 9, “Framing and reframing the mainstream media”

- What is the “insulating function?”
- How is this tied to the “echo chamber” effect?
- How do J&C define “framing on p. 141?”
- How can “framing be done by means of priming?”
- What is “semantic priming?”
- What makes the difference to either side in the competition to frame an issue?
- What is an “opinion leader?”
- Does Limbaugh meet the definition of an opinion leader?
- How do the conservative media see their role versus the mainstream media?
- If the double standard argument is important (it is), how did Schwarzenegger’s candidacy vs. Gray Davis show that?
- How does the conservative media see itself as monitoring the mainstream for bias?
- How is Limbaugh’s name-calling “priming?”
- How does the mainstream media portray the conservative media?

Chapter 10, “Engendering and reinforcing distrust of mainstream media”

- Does Limbaugh’s rhetoric engender mistrust of the mainstream media?
- How does fig. 10.1 show this?
- What is the “overall pattern” of the authors’ findings?
- What does Fig. 10.3 show?
- Which two topics did Limbaugh discuss every day from Jan. through Nov. 1996?
  - Were the comments always negative?
  - How many reframing attacks, and positive citations did he make?
  - How did he invoke the double standard?
- What does fig. 10.5 show about Limbaugh’s listeners’ media consumption in 1996?
- What happened to Limbaugh’s listeners and their use of mainstream media by 2004? Why?
- What is the relationship between their mistrust of other media and its decline?
  - Was it the insulating function of conservative media?
- Is this part of a trend?
• How much of the time does the audience for FOX News spend watching something else?
Chapter 11, “Defining and defending an insular interpretive community”

- Define “in-group rhetoric.”
  - How does it work in both directions?
  - What role does emotion play?
  - How does it construct aspects of a “balkanized knowledge enclave?”
- What do Limbaugh’s discussion topics have to do with this kind of emotionally charged rhetoric? What are topics?
- What is “argument by definition?” How is it like “semantic framing?”
- How does Limbaugh use it to create a common enemy? (See p. 180, par. 3).
- How do conservative and mainstream media “select and deflect reality in different ways” (p. 180-181)? Describe the example of Fox vs. CBS and NBC.
- What is the role of ridicule?
  - Where does Limbaugh use ridicule most?
  - How does it contribute to polarization and balkanization? Is it a form of inoculation?
  - What is your favorite epithet here?
Chapter 12, “Balkanization of Knowledge and Interpretation”

- What does Cass Sunstein believe about polarization and balkanization?
- How is balkanization related to a “distorted knowledge enclave?”
- What does exposure to Limbaugh create in terms of balkanization?
- The authors define “balkanization” as an “insulating, knowledge building phenomenon.”
  - How is it different from a “perfectly closed system?”
- How are polarization and balkanization related? How are they different?
- What is the relationship of distortion to balkanization?
  - How is distortion dysfunctionalizing? See figs. 12.3 A&B on p. 201.
- How do the authors explain differences in knowledge on four issues in fig. 12-1?
  - What was the difference between Limbaugh listeners and MSMM?
  - How do the two groups exemplify balkanization?
  - How can it be to their advantage to be balkanized in either direction?
  - How does distortion of issues work create balkanization (p. 199)?
- What is “civics knowledge?”
  - How does it impact the habitual and successful reception of the news?
  - How does a low civics knowledge make people more susceptible to Limbaugh? (See p. 202.)
- What is the role of ideology in making sense of the “news?” (p. 203)?
  - How did the authors validate the concept of ideological interpretation? See p. 205.
- What is the difference between knowledge of a candidate’s policies and his/her performance as in a debate?
  - How might civics knowledge play here?
  - How does this compare to the concepts of the cognitive and cultural frame?
• What impact on audience perception did listening to Limbaugh have on reactions to the Ron Brown story?

• What impact on balkanization did the Swift Boat Veterans for truth have?

Chapter 13, “Distortion and Polarization”

• What is “distortion?”
  o How is it related to polarization?
  o And to selective exposure?

• How do the two kinds of bias, contrast and assimilation, produce polarization?

• What is “biased processing?”

• What is the definition of “polarization?”

• What does fig. 13.1 and the related discussion tell us about the importance of the media consumed?
  o What did Limbaugh do that Talk of the nation not do?
  o What is the boomerang effect shown by liberals on race when they listened to Rush?

• What happened on the capital gains issue? (See fig. 13.2.)

• How did liberals who listened to Limbaugh react to the EITC (earned income tax credit) proposal? Why? (See pp. 222-223; fig. 13.3).

• What effect does Limbaugh’s message have on PTR listeners, in general?

• What role did contested facts and opinions play in coverage by Limbaugh of the 2004 election? (Let’s read over pp. 231-232 for examples.)

• What was the opinion enclave that Limbaugh constructed for Bush voters?
  o What does it do?

• How did factual context and opinion work for the Democrats? How was it contested (p. 233)?

• What was the role of uncontested facts (p. 234)?

• How do information enclaves contribute to polarization?
Chapter 14, “Conclusion: Echo Chamber: Cause for concern or celebration?”

- What is the stated focus of “Echo Chamber?” (p. 237)
- Whose side do the authors take?
- What are the three effects the authors have studied in this book (p. 238)?
- What is the effect for conservatives of attacking “liberals” and “liberalism?”
- How does the Limbaugh-created echo chamber create a Manichean dichotomy between “liberalism” and “conservatism?”
- How is the Reagan legacy a sacred cow for Limbaugh and the conservative media?
- How do the authors sort out the chicken-and-egg question of whether media cause ideology or vice versa?
- What is the authors’ main concern about Limbaugh’s relationship to the Republican Party?
- What is “reciprocal influence?”
- Are J&C arguing that conservatives have “barricaded themselves within the conservative establishment?”
- Do they see this set of effects as bad for democracy?
- What are the positives they see?
- Is the mainstream “liberal?
- What advantage do they see in Limbaugh? And his work?
- Which downsides do they see (p. 245)?
- How is accountability compromised by the Limbaugh/Fox effect
- Which limitation most concerns the authors (p. 245)?
- See also p. 246 par. 3.
- What are the positive effects of an echo chamber?