### Graded exercises

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exercises</th>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Due</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Written analysis 1: Framing in the conservative media</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Feb. 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Written analysis 2: Conservative media analysis</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>March 14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Written analysis 3: Is NPR “liberal?”</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>May 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final essay</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>TBD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group panel discussions in class</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presenters</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audience (5@1 ea.)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total** 100
Assignments described

As listed (above), you will write four assignments in the course of this semester. All four are described in detail in “handouts” at the back of this syllabus. Each will complement the readings I have assigned and the discussions we will have in class about them.

The first assignment, the framing exercise, will give you the opportunity to apply concepts from our reading to a comparative analysis of two news articles, one from Fox News and one from the New York Times. We will discuss the news in these terms all semester.

The second exercise is designed to give you the chance to examine media frames and related media agendas presented within the conservative media (the Wall Street Journal, Rush Limbaugh, and Sean Hannity). The third exercise will have you conduct a study of National Public Radio’s program, “On the Media” to assess allegations of its “liberal” bias.

The final paper—a 5 pp. essay—will give you the opportunity to synthesize your analyses in the first three pieces, as well your course reading, lecture and discussion notes, into a coherent understanding of conservative media, the “echo chamber,” and the broader context within which these media operate.

Also, as a model for your daily discussions of media content, at one of the five different points noted in the syllabus as “group discussions,” you will take turns making (and responding to) graded presentations based on your own diaries of your media viewing, reading, and listening to the conservative media (and others). These presentations, which will call for you to integrate course concepts into your discussions, will involve your preparing multi-media presentations with your group members, including video clips, audio clips, text from editorials, and other media to describe the common editorial agenda in the three conservative media we will focus on (the WSJ, Limbaugh, and Hannity.) The Factiva Web site will serve as a key resource for you in preparing these discussions.
Required texts

Available at the IMU bookstore (Old Capitol):


3. Viguerie, Richard A. & Franke, David. (2004). *America’s Right Turn: How Conservatives Used New and Alternative Media to Take Power*. Chicago: Bonus Books. ISBN: 1-56625-252-0 (hardcover only). **Note:** Because this title is out of print, it is available only from Amazon.com for one cent (!) plus shipping. Order your copy as soon as the semester starts; we’ll read it after Spring break.

4. Reading packet. Available at Zephyr Copies on E. Washington Street. (All other readings listed in the syllabus are here. A copy will be placed on reserve in the Journalism reading room.)

On-line resources (no cost):

a. *The Wall Street Journal* — Available at no charge through the UI’s subscription to the Factiva database. (See last pages of syllabus for log-in instructions.)


c. Sean Hannity on Fox: http://www.hannity.com
COURSE OBJECTIVES

At the end of this course, you will understand:

- critical concepts of media framing;
- the uses of social scientific research methods to establish empirical evidence of media effects;
- concepts of the ‘objective’ journalism vs. the journalism of opinion and assertion;
- concepts related to media polarization;
- concepts related to the fragmentation of the media;
- concepts related to polarization and fragmentation of the media;
- how to think critically about these effects on your own.
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.

- **Studying** — Put sufficient time and attention in preparing your writing assignments. Coming to class to participate in discussions without having read the assignments has been demonstrated to produce lower grades.

- **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 me *in advance* with an explanation. No paper will be accepted more than three weekdays after it's due.

- **Attendance is not optional.** Except in cases of documented excuses, including death in the family, 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 me 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.

- **Make-up work.** Except in exceptional and documented situations, all make-up work (arranged prior to your absence) must be completed within the summer schedule.

- **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.

- **Unethical conduct.** 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.cla.uiowa.edu/students/academic_handbook/ix.shtml.

- **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. 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 me *early* in the semester.
• **Complaints.** The instructor and section leaders are open to hearing student concerns related to the course. We encourage you to resolve conflicts directly. If you feel uncomfortable bringing a concern to your section leader, you may consult, in the following order: Dr. Frank Durham; 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.
Schedule of readings and assignments

Jan. 22        Course overview—syllabus.


C. Video: 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.)


Written analysis 1—framing analysis assignment made; see hand-out at back of syllabus.

- Chapter Four: “Journalism of verification,” pp. 70-93.
- Chapter Five: Kovach & Rosenstiel, “Independence from faction.”

Feb. 5  PBS Frontline: “News War: What’s Happening to the News.” Part Three, Chapters 1-10; approx. 75 minutes long.

Feb. 7  Group 1 presentation and discussion

Written analysis 1 (framing exercise) due in class.

Feb. 12  “Outfoxed” (dvd)


**Parts 1 & 2.**

Feb. 19  Framing assignment papers returned; discussion in class.


Parts 3 & 4.

Written analysis 2: Conservative media explained.

Feb. 26  Group presentation & discussion 2.

and the news media from Iraq to Katrina. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.


Notes:
(a) In addition to reading the article, please read the summary of this article at: newsinfo.iu.edu/news/page/normal/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

March 12 Group 3 presentation & discussion.


Written analysis 2 due in class.

March 19-21 Spring Break
March 26  Red State/Blue State audio (1 hour). See:

http://www.thisamericanlife.org/radio-archives/episode/478/red-state-blue-state

March 28  Jamieson & Cappella: *Echo Chamber: Rush Limbaugh and the Conservative Media Establishment*

Preface, Chapters 1-4.

April 2  *Echo Chamber*, Chapters 5-9.

April 4  *Echo Chamber*, Chapters 10-14.

April 9  Written analysis 2 returned for discussion.

April 11  Group 4 presentation and discussion.

April 16  Written exercise 3 — “Is NPR biased?” — presented in class.

We will listen to this hour of “On the Media” to get the assignment:

1) http://www.onthemedia.org/2012/sep/14/brief-history-bias-accusations-against-npr/ (intro. — 6 minutes)

2) http://www.onthemedia.org/2012/sep/14/brief-history-bias-accusations-against-npr/ (16 minutes)

3) http://www.onthemedia.org/2012/sep/14/conclusions-nprs-liberal-bias/?utm_source=/2012/sep/14/does-npr-have-liberal-bias&utm_medium=treatment&utm_campaign=morelikethis (18 minutes)

(4) http://www.onthemedia.org/2012/sep/14/ira-glasss-challenge/

April 30  Final paper explained. It will be due at the date and time otherwise scheduled for the final exam. (Remember: There is no final exam.)


Group 5 presentation & discussion.

May 2   Written exercise 3 (“On the media”) due. Discussion in class.

May 7   Individual conferences about the final essay during class and office hours.

May 9   Individual conferences about the final essay during class and office hours.
INSTRUCTIONS FOR GROUP DISCUSSION RESEARCH: Linking to the Wall Street Journal (and other newspapers):

There are a couple of ways to link to the Wall Street Journal. Option a. is better for reading/browsing current and recent issues. Option b. is better for locating known and older articles. Let me know what would work best for your students. I can link to the WSJ from the libguides.

a. Our subscription to the Factiva database (http://purl.lib.uiowa.edu/factiva) should open to its News Pages tab, and the first paper displaying should be The Wall Street Journal.


This takes you to our Proquest subscription for the title, and a search box. Below the search box, you can navigate to the issue you need, which should be sorted by page number.
Rubric for group presentations

I. Issue(s) identified
   Discussion presented; discussion points offered
   ___/25

II. Media identified
   ___/25

III. Media presented
   (audio, video, text, handouts)
   ___/25

IV. Framing analysis
   ___/25

100
Framing Exercise Instructions

1. Using the Factiva database, select two news articles to compare on the same topic and same date from the Wall Street Journal and the New York Times.

2. Download the articles to attach to the back of your hardcopy analysis.

3. Provide the author’s name(s), date, newspaper name, and page number at the top of your analyses of them.

4. To determine the dominant frame presented in each of these stories, analyze each according to the criteria listed below:
   a. After reading each story, identify the dominant perspective or theme of the news stories.
   b. Are there other, emerging themes in the coverage? If so, list them.

5. Media scholars Daniel Perkins and William Starosta offer a way to decode the implicit journalistic routines that can reflect ideological differences in the way that the news is written. They propose observing five points:
   (a) Who is/is not quoted?
   (b) Who is/is not given credence by title?
   (c) Where are those cited positioned within the news reports?
   (d) Whose ideas are supported (reinforced)/questioned?
   (e) And, which details are included or excluded?¹

Make lists of points in each story that match these dominant and subordinate points.

6. In their key 1989 article, scholars William Gamson & Andre’ Modigliani measured framing “devices.” Here is a list of the devices they identified. Check for these devices in the news stories you’ve read here:

(a) metaphors
(b) catchphrases
(c) exemplars
(d) depictions
(e) visual images

Does this lead you to revise your answer to Question 1? What is the dominant frame, based on the way these devices are employed in each story?

7. How do these devices represent the “structure” of the frame in each of your examples? Refer to Reese’s chapter for concepts to describe your answer.

8. What does this tell you about how the ideological position has been constructed in each your examples?

Summary

In summary, discuss the ideological or value-based differences that you may have found. How do the mechanics of the story outlined in the criteria above indicate the bases for these differences?

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Study Guide

Note-taking guidelines

Take notes based on the questions in this study guide, while completing your daily reading assignments. These notes should be useful to you in class as discussion prompts or references. In particular, take notes on:

- The main point or thesis of an article or chapter;
- Key concepts that the author(s) define and apply;
- Brief notes on examples that they may give;
- Points that strike your imagination as in: “What I found most interesting in this piece was...;”
- The URL for a media clip (video or audio) that provides an example of a concept in this reading.


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).
  - How do Gamson’s “packages” work here?
How does the core ideology of individualism play in the framing contest over poverty? (p. 61).

- News reports focus on the individual, rather than the structural aspects of the issue.
- They tend to be event-centered or “episodic” (Iyengar, 1991), rather than more process-driven.
- 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)
Kovach & Rosenstiel — Chapter 3, “Who journalists work for”

Concepts:

Normative ideals (norms)

Audience first

Journalistic ethics

Editorial independence

Professionalization/end of localism (“News Bedouins”)

Detachment (“why” over “what”)

MBO/incentive programs (This is applied at the university today.)

Reader/viewer vs. “customer” (see UI model.)

Questions:

Journalism is a business, to be sure. But given that, how do K&R’s norms about who journalists work for compare to the description of Fox we saw yesterday in “Outfoxed?”

What is the “triangle” of the journalistic business model?

What is the “Wall?” (Remember the LA Times scandal.)

What is an “incentive program” for news executives?

What is the role of business coverage in the news business today?

What is the prevalent business strategy at most television stations? (To whom do they appeal most?)

What is the tension between covering business news and “working for citizens?” What do K&R fear that this is doing to the quality of journalism?

The “Outfoxed” documentary described Fox as a business. In that case, who were/are Fox’s journalists working for? Are they “journalists,” according to Bob McChesney? What are they?

What sparked cost-cutting in newspapers in the 1990s? How did this challenge journalistic independence?
Five key ideas (norms):

1. Owner/corp. must be committed to citizens first. (See SPJ Code of Ethics.)
2. Hire business managers who also put citizens first.
3. Set and communicate clear standards.
4. Journalists have final say over news.
5. Communicate clear standards to the public.

*How does Fox compare at each of these points?*
K&R, chapter 4, “Journalism of verification”

Objectivity
Verification
Triangulation
Assertion vs. verification
Realism
Reliability/method for validity/news
Fairness and balance

- “Some people say…” — How much verification under lies this kind of statement on Fox News?
- What does “verification” have to do with “objectivity?”
- How is ‘realism” different from “objectivity?”
- How were Walter Lippman’s “untrained, accidental witnesses” like today’s “bloggers?” Can either group be considered “journalists” by the authors’ standard of objectivity?
- When is balance a problem? And fairness?
- Which norms do K&R present no pp. 78-86?
- What are the techniques of verification? How do they ensure a “reliable” method?
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?
Brock et al., *The Fox Effect*

Part One, including the Introduction

p. 8

Who is Bill Sammon?

What is a “chyron?”

p. 9

What is the “firewall” at Fox News Network (FNN)? Is it there, according to the authors?

p. 11

What changed at Fox News in 2009? What do the authors say that meant in terms of Fox News’ approach to journalism?

pp. 11-16

What kind of organization is Media Matters?

What is their charge against Fox News Network?

How do they substantiate their claims?

p. 16

What is Rupert Murdoch’s relationship to FNN? His reaction to Roger Ailes’ management of it?

p. 17

What do the authors say FNN’s relationship to the Republican Party is?

What do they say its impact on electoral turnout is?
Chapter One

pp. 21-32

Who is Roger Ailes?

pp. 33-35

Who was Willie Horton?

See: www.youtube.com/watch?v=wTdUQ9SYhUw

For campaign 2012 NYT piece on conservative plan to inject race into campaign, see: www.nytimes.com/2012/05/17/us/politics/gop-super-pac-weighs-hard-line-attack-on-obama.html?_r=1&ref=politics

pp. 38-47

What are the highlights of Ailes career?

How do the authors characterize him?

Chapter Two

p. 49

Why did Rupert Murdoch become a naturalized American citizen?

p. 52

Where did Bill O’Reilly work before FNN?

pp. 53-55

Who was John Ellis?

p. 56

What do the authors say about FNN, “fairness” and “winning?”

p. 57

What was the role of the American flag in FNN’s branding strategy?
What happened to FNN’s ratings after Sept. 11, 2001?

**Part Two**

**Chapter Three**

How did Ailes and FNN frame Obama during the 2008 presidential campaign? Which themes did they exploit?

What did E.D. Hill say about the Obama’s “fist bump?” What happened to his show after that?

Where did the birth certificate issue come from?

Who was Dick Morris? What was his past role with the Clintons? What was his role at FNN?

**Chapter Four**

What does it mean to call FNN a “Stalinesque mouthpiece?” For whom?

How do the authors contract Sammon’s approach to journalism with Brit Humes’?

How does Tom Fiedler describe the FNN approach to journalism? Cite examples.

What did Sammon order the FNN staff to do regarding Obama administration language on-air?
What are the “Moody memos?” What do they substantiate about the Media Matters claims?

p. 91

What was the effect on FNN of this administrative change?

p. 92

How do the authors characterize the FNN opposition to the Obama administration?

p. 94

What were the “FOXfacts?” What do they show regarding the reflexive role played by conservative media versus each other in establishing common ideological frames?

pp. 97-100

What did Glenn beck say about the stimulus package? (Pick your favorite line.)

Chapter Five

pp. 104-108

Where did the Tea Party originate?

pp. 108-115

How did FNN become a part of the story, while covering it?

What was the effect of the FNN-sponsored Tea Parties?

pp. 115-117

How did FNN develop a fear appeal to dissuade viewers from supporting the Obama healthcare initiative?

What is a “death panel?”

pp. 118-131

How did FNN promote town hall meetings?

What kinds of frames were applied to the Democratic healthcare initiative in that coverage?
Who was Steve Doocy?

What was Rush Limbaugh’s position on the initiative? How much sense did he make?

p. 135

What was Sarah Palin’s “award-winning lie? Who revived it? Why?

pp. 137-138

How was budget reconciliation framed by FNN?

What did the policy actually mean?

pp. 140-142

How did FNN support the Republican effort against the health care initiative?

Chapter Six

pp. 143-148

What did Beck say about Obama and race? Which frames did he invoke?

pp. 148-153

How was Beck’s violent rhetoric linked to acts by viewers?

pp. 153-156

What was the “9/12 Project?”

Chapter Seven

pp. 157-159

What was ACORN?

What were the substantive issues with it?

What was the Catch-22 for ACORN with these allegations?
pp. 161-168

Who was Andrew Breitbart? James O’Keefe? What did their video work mean to ACORN?

pp. 168-169

What are the six steps that FNN followed to stir up national controversies?

pp. 170-177

How did these six steps apply to issues like climate change?

Chapter Eight

pp. 182-187

What role did Breitbart and O’Keefe play in FNN’s attack on Shirley Sherrod?

pp. 187-188

How did the race theme resonate with the historically conservative frame of anti-communism? Via Willie Horton?

Chapter Nine

pp. 197-204

How did FNN help Republican candidates raise funds? What was the problem with this?

How did FNN edit video of Democratic candidates?

What was the Catholic issue? How did FNN frame it?

p. 211-212

How did FNN engage republican candidates like Sarah Palin and others?

Chapter 10
How did FNN use its “brand” to support Republican candidates?

Who asked Michele Bachmann, “How can I help you raise money?”

Which company gave $1M to the U.S. Chamber of Commerce here?

What was “Operation Restoring Honor?” On which anniversary did it fall?

How did FNN interpret “racial overtones” in Obama’s speech?

**Part Four**

**Chapter Eleven**

In general, what was the FNN relationship worth to candidates who appeared on-air? To the party?

What happened to Glenn Beck’s performance in this late period? How was it anti-semitic? What did Bill Kristol say about him?


- 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?

p. 229
• 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?

p. 230
• 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?

p. 231
• 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?

p. 232
• 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?

p. 233
• 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”

p. 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?)

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?
Conservative media and framing 45
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.”
  o How does it work in both directions?
  o What role does emotion play?
  o 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?
  o Where does Limbaugh use ridicule most?
  o How does it contribute to polarization and balkanization? Is it a form of inoculation?
  o What does he do to Sen. Robert Byrd? (pp. 184-190).
  o 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?”
  - How is it related to polarization?
  - 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?
  - What did Limbaugh do that “Talk of the Nation” not do?
  - 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?
  - 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?