Journalism functions

J201 Introduction to Mass Communication
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Things to remember

① Short writing assignment 3 is due by section this week (via turnitin)

② Wednesday March 2 Midterm review during class.

③ Friday March 4– Midterm (during regular class time)
Journalism functions - today’s class plan

① Coordinating action in society

② Characteristics of political systems

③ Societal functions of journalism

④ How journalists have accomplished those functions? (Basic journalistic roles)
Action coordination mechanisms

① Political Power
② Market
③ Common understanding
Action coordination mechanisms and political regimes

- Authoritarian political systems
- Democratic political systems

Demos – archy
Problems of democracy

- Scope/expertise/time
  - Direct democracy
  - Representative democracy
  - Deliberative democracy
Historical transition made possible by revolutions

FROM SUBJECTS TO CITIZENS

SUBJECTS
- Little decision-making input
- ‘Best’ quality is loyalty
- Deferential to authorities
- Little need for information
- No need for opinion formation

CITIZENS
- (Some) input into decision-making
- Independent thinking
- Challenges authority
- Need for information
- Need for opinion formation
The public sphere - Media

Common meaning

Soft Power
Societal functions of journalism

• Keep those in power accountable:
  - Informed of what government is doing
  - How that affects you

• Enhance citizenship/self government

• Entman: Provide knowledge on:
  - Policy issues
  - Actions of those in power
  - Ideology (perspectives that shape decisions)
  - Self interest (your stakes on issues)
Societal functions of journalism

- Curran (traditional functions)
  - Inform
  - Scrutinize
  - Debate
  - Represent

- Platform for open debate/ voice of the people

- Media is not alone. Other intermediaries of civil society (Parties, NGOs, independent judiciary)
- There is multiplicity in media (civic, social, core)
• What is news?

“News is that part of communication that keeps us informed of the changing events, issues, and characters in the world outside. Though it may be interesting or even entertaining, the foremost value of news is as a utility to empower the informed.”

- Bill Kovach and Tom Rosenstiel
News that meets certain standards

Key journalistic standards:

- Accuracy
- Balance
- Checks on pure profit maximization
- Democratic accountability focus
- Editorial separation
Different outlets contribute differently to these functions:

1. “Traditional” journalism (neutral-fact oriented)

2. Advocacy journalism (advancing a particular policy solution)

3. Tabloid journalism (commercial considerations)

1. Entertainment media
Different outlets contribute differently to these functions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Media category</th>
<th>Commitment to key journalistic standards</th>
<th>Core organizational values and missions</th>
<th>Target analysis and market constraints</th>
<th>Prototypical message content</th>
<th>Performance of news functions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Traditional journalism</td>
<td>All 5 key standards of traditional journalism (accuracy, balance, etc.)</td>
<td>1. Democratic watchdog 2. Profit 3. Give useful information for monitoring and coping with the world</td>
<td>1. Politically interested citizens 2. Upscale and midscale consumers 3. At apex (NYT, WSJ) driven by national, not local, audiences</td>
<td>1. News story about a top government official’s actions/proposals 2. Opinion column on current policy issue 3. More detailed news story or full interview transcript on Web site</td>
<td>Performed most consistently and overtly</td>
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<td>NYT/LAT/Chi. Tribune</td>
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<td>CBS Evening News</td>
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<td>Meet the Press</td>
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<td>Time/Newsweek</td>
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<td>Advocacy journalism</td>
<td>Commitment to only 3–4 standards</td>
<td>1. Democratic watchdog 2. Agenda setting and policy impact</td>
<td>1. Politically informed, ideologically committed citizens 2. Upscale and midscale consumers</td>
<td>1. Investigative story probing hidden consequences 2. Opinion/analytical essay or polemic 3. One-sided, aggressive interview</td>
<td>Performed, but how well depends on one’s ideological perspective</td>
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<td>The Nation/Weekly Standard</td>
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<td>Documentary film</td>
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<td>Nonfiction books by Michael Moore, Ann Coulter et al.</td>
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<td>Tabloid journalism</td>
<td>Commitment to 0–2 standards</td>
<td>1. Profit 2. Amusement and diversion 3. Agenda setting and policy impact</td>
<td>1. Downscape consumers 2. Ideologically committed citizens</td>
<td>1. Local news: crime, accidents, fires, soft news. 2. Other tabloids: unusual crime or sensational scandal 3. Ideologically driven polemics</td>
<td>Rarely performed</td>
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<td>Local television news</td>
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<td>America’s Most Wanted</td>
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<td>O’Reilly Factor/ New York Post</td>
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<td>Matt Drudge Web site</td>
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<td>National Enquirer</td>
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<td>Entertainment</td>
<td>Commitment to 0–4 standards</td>
<td>1. Profit 2. Amusement and diversion</td>
<td>Everyone, with segmentation of specific target audiences in many cases</td>
<td>1. Fictional dramatic narrative 2. Interview or documentary nonfiction narrative of good vs. evil, or personal redemption 3. Comedic monologue or situation comedy</td>
<td>Indirectly performed</td>
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<td>Infotainment TV (Oprah/Today Show)</td>
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<td>Infotainment magazines (People)</td>
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<td>Television and film drama; novels</td>
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Table 1: Major Distinctions among Media
And they are organized to “make” the news

KEY ROLES IN JOURNALISM

• Publisher
• Business staff
• Managing editor
• Editors (theme/copy)
• Reporters
• Ombudsperson
• Opinion writers/columnists
See you Wednesday.