

Teaching Media Literacy through the Topic of Terrorism

Lessons and resources on media literacy
for the middle and high school classroom



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INTRODUCTION

Rationale

As we are all keenly aware, students are greatly influenced by the media. They make value judgments and form opinions based largely on images and information from television, radio, the Internet and movies. We as educators need to pay attention to the role of the news media as a source of all kinds of persuasive information – accurate and valuable as well as misleading or false, evenhanded as well as biased, straightforward as well as highly manipulative. We also need to confront the critical role of the media in shaping our own as well as our students' views, and to ensure that the sources we use are truly representative of multiple perspectives. By using a variety of news sources, and applying our own careful judgment and critical analysis, we can come closer to that always-elusive goal: the “truth.”

Representations of the world, especially the developing world, are sometimes reduced to simple or even stereotypical images and texts. News reports – which traditionally tend to focus on dramatic or unusual events and developments, may seem to consist largely of starving children, victims of wars, diseases and natural disasters. These representations may encourage impressions that developing countries and peoples are hopelessly bogged down with problems they can never hope to conquer. At the same time, mass media coverage of such tragedies – such as famine in Ethiopia or earthquakes in Turkey, have often inspired outpourings of humanitarian aid from the developed world that otherwise might not have occurred.

The inclusion of media education in classrooms has been used by numerous countries as a way to address students' access to information. Just as we now talk about the “digital divide” as the gap between resources available to the “haves” and “have nots,” countries such as Spain and Italy have used media education since the 1970's to address social inequities, while nations including South Africa, England, Scotland, Canada, and Australia have used it in language arts classes to inform students.

(See <http://interact.uoregon.edu/MediaLit/mlr/readings/articles/hobbs/australia.html> for a very interesting cross-cultural discussion of media education).

This curriculum

In an effort to present a balanced view of the complex issues wrapped up in the current “war on terrorism” and to teach young people to think critically about the sources of their information, this guide is intended to do three things:

1. Offer a wide range of media outlets to draw from and save you the step of screening them for student use. The most recommended sources are described.
2. Provide useful vocabulary, lesson ideas, and questions for engaging students in becoming critical consumers of news information.
3. Present lessons on the topic of terrorism as a vehicle for teaching media literacy.

Goals

The lessons provided will encourage students to:

- Think critically and analyze sources of information (and their messages) to make informed conclusions.
- Become enlightened citizens in a pluralistic society, with opportunities to participate in that society.
- “Talk back to the media” by letting journalists know when their reports fail to live up to the highest professional standards of accuracy, balance and fairness.

By learning skills for media literacy, students can adopt a more critical stance in responses to the information and images they receive and can be empowered to use media effectively to enhance both their personal development and their participation in the community. And, as informed consumers of media, they can help improve the media.

Approach

Dialogue is emphasized throughout the unit, as it will generate more sophisticated understanding. This curriculum is not meant to provide any answers to the questions raised or to the role that the media should play. Just as students should learn to think critically when reading articles, teachers are encouraged to think critically about the issues raised within this curriculum as they implement it in their classrooms.

Many of the resources cited in this curriculum are on-line. Teachers who have difficulty using the Internet and are interested in seeing these on-line resources should contact the World Affairs Council for assistance.

Conclusion

According to Richard Rothstein in an article published in *The New York Times* on September 19, 2001 (p. 24), very few teachers in the United States were doing an adequate job of teaching critical thinking skills necessary to analyze this complicated topic during the week after September 11th. Much of the reason for this had to do with the fact that the event happened at the start of the school year, that teachers lacked the resources to bring media education into their classrooms, and that mandated curriculum fails to include enough time for media education and response to international events.

This curriculum, written by an award-winning social studies teacher, attempts to make media education relevant and real for teachers and students in 7-12 grade classrooms. It makes note of cross-disciplinary or cross-regional comparisons that can be made between the “war on terrorism” and on-going world issues. The themes raised in this curriculum—propaganda, terrorism, democracy, and free press—are issues that extend well beyond the conflict in Afghanistan. The author and editors of this curriculum hope that it will help provide a wider range of resources to support media education.

GETTING STARTED

Some general questions for class discussion:

- Have the news media been accurate, fair, responsible, and effective in coverage of the war on terrorism? Why/why not?
- Is it important to consult news sources from more than one country about news events, especially when multiple countries are involved? Why/why not?
- What is the difference between “propaganda” and news? How do we tell?
- During wartime, should we balance freedom of the press and the public’s right to know with the military’s concern for effective operations, minimal casualties, and the need for national security?
- What is the role of the editorial page? Why are opinions as important to explore as unbiased, “objective” reports?
- What specific rights and responsibilities do the media have in a time of war? How do journalists balance them if they conflict?
- What challenges do journalists face in covering a global war on terrorism, with many covert operations?
- What role do public opinion polls play? What role do you think they *should* play?
- What are your impressions of public attitudes about the war? About the President? The military actions in Afghanistan? The potential for more terrorist attacks?
- Have you seen any opinion polls that ask about alternative foreign policy solutions (besides military action)? What alternatives can you name that might be effective?
- Should the media play an active role in asking tough questions of U.S. policymakers and military leaders? Who should ask tough questions of the media?
- If you were a journalist today, what questions would you most like to ask President Bush? Defense Secretary Rumsfeld? Osama bin Laden?
- How do the “mainstream media” portray anti-war protest groups? Fairly or not?
- Have the media played any role in heightening American patriotism? Should that be part of the media’s job? Why or why not?
- Identify the main news sources you are aware of (including TV, radio, print and the web). From which source do you get most of your news?
- Do these sources provide a range of viewpoints? Why/why not?
- What kinds of “experts” have you read, seen or heard quoted most often since 9/11? Have the media you have followed offered “experts” on all sides?
- When “alternative” voices and groups appear, how are they presented?
- How do images conveyed by graphics, photographs, and video footage affect the way news is delivered and the way(s) it will be received?
- What about presentations of the anchors and reporters themselves (i.e., backgrounds, clothing, appearance, demeanor, etc.)? Should television programs use backgrounds and logos such as waving flags? Should anchors and reporters wear flag lapel pins? Why or why not?
- Are important ideas and controversial issues expressed with all their complexities or oversimplified? Can you think of examples either way?
- Who makes up the guest list on most news programs like *Meet the Press*, *Face the Nation*, *This Week*, *The News Hour*? What about news magazine shows such as *60 Minutes*, *20/20*, *Dateline*? How about news/entertainment shows like the *Today Show*, *Good Morning America*, *The Early Show*? How do the cable-news channels such as CNN, Fox and MSNBC compare? Why are there differences?

Food for thought

“Media events are sites of maximum visibility and maximum turbulence. The media event brings to the surface the values, assumptions and meanings that are the most central to the belief structure of a particular culture, but it may also have the effect of silencing other values, alternative perspectives, competing bids for meaning. What media analysis tries to do is both locate and explain the meanings that seem to dominate our discussions of a particular event – in this case, issues of nationalism, security, morality, mourning, militarism – and at the same time to locate or describe those meanings which are being pushed aside or forgotten – in this case, perhaps multiculturalism, civil liberties, international cooperation, the humanity of the enemy. Media analysis can thus be the tool that can help us understand how the culture is responding to a catastrophe, as well as a tool that can help us recover important ideas and values that need to be heard, as the society deliberates about subsequent actions.”

Henry Jenkins, *Cultural Studies professor at MIT*

Source: <http://web.mit.edu/cms/reconstructions/introduction.html>

Recommended reading for class discussions on media literacy

(See “Useful Websites” on page 27 for more information.)

Special 9/11 editions of magazines such as *The New Yorker Magazine* (edition with the black cover), *Time*, *Newsweek*, *The Nation*, *The Weekly Standard* contain short essays and news articles by distinguished writers, reporters, and critics. Articles from the post-9/11 *The New Yorker* can be found at: www.newyorker.com/archive/previous/?020304frprsp_previous.

Articles from the post 9/11 *Weekly Standard* can be found at www.theweeklystandard.com (go to “Free Search” and type in “Terrorism”).

The October 21, 2001 edition of the *Philadelphia Inquirer* contains an article by Beth Gillin, titled “U.S. Intensifies the War of Words.” Available at: www.philly.com/mld/philly/archives.

A study by FAIR (Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting) looked at editorials included in the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* during the three weeks right after the 9/11 attacks. A total of 44 columns “stressed a military response,” while only two stressed non-military solutions. In addition, there was a dramatic gender imbalance. Of 107 op-ed writers at the *Post*, seven were women; at the *Times*, there were eight female op-ed writers out of 79. (Go to www.fair.org/activism/nyt-wp-opeds.html for the article.)

Recommended lesson plans (available on-line)

“Looking Through the Lenses” by Media Literacy for Development and Children’s Rights at:
www.media-awareness.ca/eng/med/class/unicef/media/activ1.htm#true

“Consider the Source: Comparing News Coverage About the Taliban Regime around the World”
(for grades 6-8, 9-12)
www.nytimes.com/learning/teachers/lessons/20010926wednesday.html

“In My Honest Opinion: Reflecting on World Events in Letters to the Editor” (focuses on conditions
at Guantanamo Bay)
www.nytimes.com/learning/teachers/lessons/20020125friday.html

“Life, Camera, Action: Analyzing Somalia as a Media Subject” suggests the follow-up question:
Why is Somalia a potential target if the U.S. war on terrorism widens?
www.nytimes.com/learning/teachers/lessons/20020123wednesday.html

“Propaganda Techniques: In Advertising, Media, Politics, and Warfare”
Offers definitions and study questions for K-12 teachers and students:
<http://members.aol.com/Donnpages/LessonPlans.html>

Provocative Quotes to Ponder in Class Discussions

These could also be used as essay prompts, in which students agree or disagree, using supporting evidence to persuade their case.

“The United States has become expert in the art of sanitizing and dehumanizing acts of war committed elsewhere. Domestically, war is no longer a national obsession; it’s a business that is now largely outsourced to experts. This is one of the country’s many paradoxes: in spite of the engine of globalization around the world, the nation has never been more inward-looking, less worldly.”

- Naomi Klein, *the Globe and Mail*, Toronto

“This war will be fought on a cultural and ideological level. We must come to understand what conditions lead people to surrender their free will, and to live by decree instead of choice – and then we must fight to eradicate those conditions. We must continue to develop cultural and spiritual tools that help people appreciate the value of human life. We must encourage the notion of free will and free expression, along with the resistance to social programming. We must protect and extend an interactive mediaspace, which promotes collectivism and creativity over isolationism and fundamentalism. It’s time to network.”

- Douglas Rushkoff, *author*

“We live in a dirty and dangerous world. There are some things the general public does not need to know about and shouldn’t. I believe democracy flourishes when the government can take legitimate steps to keep its secrets and when the press can decide whether to print what it knows.”

- Katherine Graham, *Washington Post* owner

“When war is declared, Truth is the first casualty.”

- Arthur Ponsonby, *British diplomat/writer*

“Next the statesmen will invent cheap lies, putting the blame upon the nation that is attacked, and every man will be glad of those conscience-soothing falsities, and will by and by convince himself that the war is just, and will thank God for the better sleep he enjoys after this process of grotesque self-deception.”

- Mark Twain, *The Mysterious Stranger*, 1916

“Since war is particularly unpleasant, military discourse is full of euphemisms. In the 1940s, America changed the name of the War Department to the Department of Defense. Under the Reagan Administration, the MX-Missile was renamed ‘The Peacekeeper.’ During war-time, civilian casualties are referred to as ‘collateral damage,’ and the word ‘liquidation’ is used as a synonym for ‘murder.’”

-Aaron Delwiche, *Propaganda Analysis*, Washington University, March 12, 1995

“We’re working hard for a set of guidelines so terrorists can’t use information that this country produces against us...It comes down to a risk-benefit ratio ...[to prevent] information getting into the wrong hands.”

- Tom Ridge,

U.S. Director of Homeland Security

“The failure was sweeping. We did not [before 9/11] examine the country’s anti-terrorism efforts adequately, our intelligence capabilities, our immigration policies, or the reasons for anti-Americanism... While we can debate whether this failure played a role in our national lack of preparedness, there is no question that we failed our readers.”

- Edward Seaton, *former president of the American Society of Newspaper Editors*

“Doublespeak is not lying, nor is it merely sloppy language; it is the intentional use of euphemisms, synonyms, jargon, and vagueness which pretends to communicate but really does not – or which implies the opposite of what it would appear to communicate.”

- Metta Winter, *contributing writer*,

Christian Science Monitor

“The events are momentous. As for the correspondents, they are an irresistible assortment of idealists, artists, cads, hustlers, violence junkies, and necrophiles.”

- R.Z. Shepard, *Time Magazine* review of “*The First Casualty*” by Phillip Knightley

“When there is little or no elite dissent from a government policy, ...and fundamental dissent is virtually excluded from the mass media (but permitted in a marginalized press), ...a propaganda system [is created] that is far more credible and effective in putting over a patriotic agenda than one with official censorship. ...It is much more difficult to see a propaganda system at work where the media are private and formal censorship is absent. This is especially true where the media actively compete, periodically attack and expose corporate and government malfeasance, and aggressively portray themselves as spokesmen for free speech and the general community interest.”

- *Edward Herman and Noam Chomsky, Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media, 1988*

“They hate America. They want to kill us and destroy us. Who can explain madmen and who can explain evil? They see themselves as the world’s losers. They’d never admit that. They see us, we have everything. We win everything. They see themselves and think, we should be a great people, but we’re not. It drives them batty.”

- *Dan Rather, on the David Letterman Show, Sept. 17, 2001*

“European elites witnessing the unilateral exercise of U.S. power in Afghanistan, the Philippines and now Georgia resemble the ex-smoker in a room with someone who still smokes. It reminds them, sometimes intolerably, of what they once were . . . With this belief goes a nostalgia for a time when Europe was the center of the world. America’s real power is a reminder that such times are past. The more anti-American European leaders see the construction of Europe not only as a means of containing the Continent’s own enmities, but also of combating America’s political, economic, and even military power. September 11 has made it more obvious than before that there is a disjunction between European aspiration and international reality, or, to put it more bluntly, between money and mouth. Europe cannot act, so comforts itself by exercising the right to complain.”

- *Charles Moore, editor, The Daily Telegraph of London, writing in The Wall Street Journal, March 8, 2002*

“Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.”

- *Martin Luther King, Jr.*

“Today we [Islamic nations] are the poorest, the most illiterate, the most backward, the most unhealthy, the most un-enlightened, the most deprived, and the weakest of all the human race.”

- *Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf, quoted by Zaffar Abbas of BBC News, in a Feb. 16, 2002, address to a conference in Islamabad of science and technology ministers from Muslim countries*

“I’d love to blame the media [for the shortage of international news], but it’s the public. Foreign news is a tough sell. There’s not much of a popular market out there for it.”

- *S. Robert Lichter, president, Center for Media and Public Affairs*

“News organizations were guilty of the same lack of judgment and neglect of duty for which editorial writers have rebuked the Central Intelligence Agency and other government institutions.”

- *Michael Parks, former editor, Los Angeles Times*

“White guilt pushes the West into a place where it can redeem its moral authority only by making a virtue of moral equivalency. This means that weakness, backwardness, even sinfulness in minorities and the Third World are unmentionable.... White guilt morally and culturally disarms the West. It makes the First World apologetic. And this, of course, only inflames the narcissism of the ineffectual. In the vacuum of power created by guilt, a world-wide class of guilt hustlers has emerged. America and the West must cease this three-decade-long indulgence in guilt, moral equivalency, and apologia. None of this redeems the West or uplifts the Third World.”

- *Shelby Steele, Hoover Institution Research Fellow, in The Wall Street Journal, Sept. 17, 2001*

“It does me no injury for my neighbor to say there are twenty Gods or no God.”

- *Thomas Jefferson*

LESSON 1

CREATING A FREE AND INDEPENDENT PRESS

Goal

The purpose of this lesson is to encourage students to think about the elements that characterize a free and independent media within a country. By taking a critical look at the American media and then applying characteristics to the creation of a free media in post-war Afghanistan, students will develop critical thinking skills that help them to analyze media reports they read, watch, or hear.

Part I – “In Wartime, the People Want the Facts”

The *Project for Excellence in Journalism*, a research institute affiliated with Columbia University in New York, recently released a new study that examined the coverage of the “war on terrorism” by various elements of the media. In their book, [The Elements of Journalism](#), authors Bill Kovach and Tom Rosenstiel state “that the purpose of journalism is to provide people with the information they need to be free and self-governing. To fulfill this task:

- Journalism’s first obligation is to the truth.
- Its first loyalty is to citizens.
- Its essence is a discipline of verification.
- Its practitioners must maintain an independence from those they cover.
- It must serve as an independent monitor of power.
- It must provide a forum for public criticism and compromise.
- It must strive to make the significant interesting and relevant.
- It must keep the news comprehensive and proportional.
- Its practitioners must be allowed to exercise their personal conscience.”

(More information about the study and book, available for purchase, can be found at http://www.journalism.org/ccj/resources/elements_intro.html#reviews.)

Lesson

Invite the students to rank these statements in order of priority. Ideas students might think about:

- How might they rank them at different times, such as times of peace and times of war?
- How would their answers differ when thinking about the long term vs. the short term? Are there occasions when a statement should be violated to respond to some immediate event in the world? How should the media balance stories relevant in the short term with “beneath the surface” stories that might have long-term effects, but are seemingly less important at the moment?
- How should some of the words used in these statements (loyalty, interesting, relevant, comprehensive, proportional) be defined?
- How should the media balance the ideal expressed in these statements with the economic reality of selling papers or airtime? How should the media balance its role as educator and informer with its role as providing a service to consumers?

Extension:

Bill Kovach and Tom Rosentiel also published an op-ed piece in *The New York Times* on January 29, 2002: “In Wartime, People Want the Facts.” (It is available at the library, or for purchase from *The New York Times* archives online at <http://www.nytimes.com>.) Have students read the *New York Times* op-ed and then apply issues it raises to an article of interest. Students might take articles from different news sources covering the same subject, compare the coverage to two popular news magazines (i.e. *Newsweek* vs. *Time*), or compare opinion columns in two journals known for representing different political perspectives (i.e. the liberal *The Nation* with the conservative *The Weekly Standard*). In particular, students should think about:

- How many **sources** were cited? What were the sources?
- How many **facts** were presented? How many **opinions**?
- Was a **range of viewpoints** offered? Was **dissent** provided?
- What **limitations** might have been placed on the journalists writing the story?
- What **conditions** do the media need for comprehensive, fair, and independent reporting?

Part II - Creating a Free and Independent Media in Post-war Afghanistan

Internews is an international non-profit organization that “supports open media worldwide. The company fosters independent media in emerging democracies, produces innovative television and radio programming and Internet content, and uses the media to reduce conflict within and between countries” (<http://www.internews.org>). In December 2001, *Internews* issued a “Joint Statement of Concerned International Organisations: Strategic Action Plan for Media in Post-war Afghanistan,” a document that outlines a strategy for creating a free and open press in Afghanistan. This document is available online at: http://www.internews.org/news/121101_am/121101_am.htm.

Have students read the “Joint Statement,” thinking about the list of characteristics of a free press created by Kovach and Rosenstiel (page 10). Have them discuss what they would add to and/or delete from the “Joint Statement.” Discuss the cultural implications of creating such a free press and the level of support needed from the outside to make this happen.

Part III – Media and Nation-building

Discuss the increasing phenomenon of nation-building (as countries like Afghanistan try to re-invent a national identity with new leaders). Articulating rights and responsibilities of citizenship is part of writing a new constitution. Many countries that are newly democratic looked to the U.S. Constitution and to the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights as models.

Students can explore (in whole-class or small-group discussion, and/or in a position paper):

- Is a free and open press only available in a democracy? Why/why not?
- Try to name some other countries with a free and independent press.
- What countries in the Middle East or Central and South Asia have a free and independent press? Name the democracies in the Middle East and Central and South Asia.
- How would a free and independent press change the politics of non-democratic countries?
- The *Internews* joint statement emphasizes support for “independent local media.” What U.S. media sources would fit these criteria? What TV or radio stations or newspapers are locally owned? How much content is locally written or produced?
- How do people express themselves without a free and independent press?
- How has the Internet changed how people in non-democratic nations get information?

LESSON 2

IMMEDIATE RESPONSE

Goal

The purpose of this lesson is to encourage students to think critically about bias in reporting, and about the potential of the media to foster impressions about groups and nations. Students will be introduced to the concept of “othering.” (*See definition below.*) They will then analyze responses to the terrorist attacks from articles representing a variety of views (from other nations).

Warm-up activity

- Ask students to brainstorm social and political problems facing the United States (or the Pacific Northwest). If they were residents of a foreign country, and media images of these problems were all they knew of America, what might their impressions be?
- Would it be fair if the only information other people had about us in the media was negative and focused on our problems?
- Are there places in the world that the media mainly or often portray in negative ways? Name them. Why are the reports negative? Is positive information available anywhere else? Where?
- Do these reports tend to be about the government, people in general, small groups within the population, or particular individuals?
- Does it matter? Why?

Ask students to list the first things that come to their minds when you say “Middle East,” “Central Asia,” or “South Asia.”

- Has this changed since 9/11? How? Why?
- Where do these impressions come from?
- Do you think these impressions are accurate, fair and balanced? Why/why not?
- What might be missing from the pictures they have described?

Discuss what role personal beliefs/values, family, religion, education and the media have on how we see the world. These influences serve as a kind of filter, through which we see the world.

Anthropologists point out that we sometimes define who we are by contrasting ourselves with others of a different culture. What role do the media play in fostering a concept of “other”?

The concept of “othering”

You might ask students to think of an individual who is pretty much opposite to themselves (whatever that means to them). Have them record on a piece of paper all of the qualities this person possesses that makes him or her different. Then ask students to trade papers with another student. Based on the traits they listed, can the reader infer something about the author’s character, based not on what they think they *are*, but on what they say they are *not*?

Let students know that individuals and groups have done this for centuries: defining who they are by pointing to other individuals and groups as being different, as illustrating what they are *not*.

Lesson

Let students know that their job today is to gain a more comprehensive look at how leaders and governments around the world responded to the terrorist attacks in New York and Washington, DC. Before they start, ask where they got their information about U.S. and world responses in the days and weeks following 9/11.

- What was their perception of public opinion about how the U.S. should respond?
- What do they recall about how elected officials thought we should respond?
- Were there differences among these officials – the White House, Congress, governors?
- In this case, how difficult was it to identify “the enemy”? Were there multiple enemies?
- Why is it important to identify, locate and understand the enemy?
- Why is it important to detect ignorance, bias and generalizations in analyzing the statements of political leaders, their critics, and the news media?

Below is a list of selected articles from *World Press Review*, a publication that presents translated news articles from periodicals around the world. In these articles, journalists from other nations, as well as the United States, ponder a number of questions, including: “How should the U.S. respond to the World Trade Center attack?”

Groups of 4 – 5 students will be given the same article (or articles), which they will summarize and teach to fellow students – either in a **jigsaw** (where a member of each “expert group” will be placed in a new group with all experts represented) or in a group presentation to the class.

The lesson should culminate in an all-class discussion or reflective journaling on the alternatives described: military retaliation, mediation, international trial.

List of articles

Selected articles, in order of publication, from: *World Press Review* 48 (November 2001): 10-24.

- Bafana, Busani. “Zimbabwe’s Fears.” Author is *World Press Review*’s Zimbabwe correspondent.
This article is available online at: <http://www.worldpress.org/Africa/135.htm>
- Ben-Rafael, Elisa. “Two September Days.” Author is *World Press Review*’s Jerusalem correspondent.
- “No Challenge to the United States.” Article from *The Mail & Guardian*, a liberal newspaper in Johannesburg, South Africa.
- Klein, Naomi. “Game Over.” Article from *The Globe and Mail* of Toronto, Canada.
- Kamau, John. “Asking the Bitter Question.” Article from the *Daily Nation* (independent) of Nairobi, Kenya.
This article is available online at: <http://www.worldpress.org/Africa/131.htm>
- Naji Amayrah, Muhammad. “Condemnation and Compassion.” Article from *Al-Ra’i*, a pro-government publication in Amman, Jordan.
- Haruna, Mikio. “Even Worse than Pearl Harbor.” Article from *The Japan Times* (independent) of Tokyo, Japan.

LESSON 3

DEFINING A “TERRORIST”

Goal

This lesson will help students understand and think critically about the term “terrorist” as it is applied to different groups and political movements. Working collaboratively, students will use their skills in analyzing diverse sources to make a reasoned conclusion.

Background

Under the Constitution of the United States, the President, as Commander-in-Chief of the nation’s armed forces, has the primary responsibility of protecting the country from military attacks and responding in times of crisis. Presidents have historically acted forcefully and independently in such circumstances. The War Powers Act does not limit the President’s leadership authority, although it urges him to consult with Congress.¹

Immediately after the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, President Bush declared them acts of “war.” President Bush went to Congress and asked for the members’ approval, which they granted with only one dissenting vote. Bush also described it as an attack on civilization itself and the civilized world, to which most of this nation’s allies around the world, including many Islamic nations, agreed. But by officially using the term “acts of war,” military retaliation could be clearly justified. Because of the classification as “war,” Article 51 of the United Nations Charter could be used to invoke the right to self-defense. The challenge of defining the conflict as a “war” came in defining who exactly the enemy was, whether it was the terrorists (Al-Qaeda), the government (perhaps governments) harboring Al-Qaeda (the Taliban, Saddam Hussein, etc.), or the country governed by the Taliban and Saddam Hussein (i.e. Afghanistan and Iraq).

Some argued that the 9/11 attacks should have been termed a “mass crime against humanity” and that the attackers should be classified as “criminals” subject to arrest and prosecution through some legal system (although it was unclear which one).

The arguments over the definitions of “terrorist” and “war” continue, with strong and diverse viewpoints on many sides. Examples:

- An October 4, 2001, report from Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting (FAIR) titled “Media Spin Revolves Around the Word Terrorist” at <http://www.fair.org/media-beat/011004.html>.
- A September 27, 2001, report from the Media Research Center (MRC) titled “No Time for Moral Equivalence” at www.mrc.org/columns/newscol/col20010927.html

¹ Section 3 of the War Powers Act of 1973 states:

The President in every possible instance shall consult with Congress before introducing United States Armed Forces into hostilities or into situations where imminent involvement in hostilities is clearly indicated by the circumstances, and after every such introduction shall consult regularly with the Congress until United States Armed Forces are no longer engaged in hostilities or have been removed from such situations.

The complete Act can be found at: <http://www.cs.indiana.edu/statecraft/warpow.html>.

- An “On the Media” interview (National Public Radio) October 6, 2001, titled “Word Watch: Terrorism.” The transcript is available at www.wncv.org:2600/otm/transcripts_100601_terrorism.html. William Salatin, author of *The Historical Dictionary of Terrorism* and senior writer at *Slate.com*, talks about the new standard for a “terrorist” nation being broad enough that Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Jordan would fall under the Bush definition. Bush clearly stated that any nation that harbored, funded or otherwise supported terrorists could indeed be considered a terrorist nation. Do you agree or disagree?

Opening

When people use the word “terrorism,” what exactly are they describing?

Ask the class to work in small groups to come up with a definition of “terrorist,” and share ideas. Using these, create a definition the class can agree on.

Ideas to consider:

- purpose for action (i.e., death and destruction, publicity, power, martyrdom, changes in foreign policies, self-aggrandizement, fund-raising, etc.)
- tactics (i.e., targeting innocent civilians versus targeting military armed forces)
- level of popular/world support (as measured by opinion polls, sympathetic media coverage, statements by international political leaders, mobs in the street, etc. **WARNING:** This can be difficult to measure! Think about ways to measure it.)

Lesson

Using the class definition, students will be assigned to research a particular group that many people consider to be terrorists. They will need to use multiple sources from global media organizations to develop arguments on both sides: (Yes, they should be classified as terrorists. No, they do not fit the definition of a terrorist group.) After completing their analysis, they will attempt to persuade the class, in a 5-minute presentation, that the group is or is not a terrorist organization. The class will then have 5 minutes to ask questions. Each group will be assessed on: depth of content knowledge, use of multiple sources of information, consideration of both points of view, and supporting evidence to advance their conclusion.

Suggested research groups include:

- Irish Republican Army (IRA)
- African National Congress (ANC) – focusing on activities during the apartheid years
- Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO)
- Earth Liberation Front
- Greenpeace “Rainbow Warriors”
- U.S. trained Contra rebels
- Israeli Defense Force

Students should consider some of the following issues:

- History of the conflict
- Economic, cultural, and religious elements of the conflict
- Role of outside countries, observers, or other entities
- Level of civic discourse possible in the given conflict (i.e., Is there a free press? Is there an open, democratic process in which people can express themselves?)

- Multiple perspectives of people living with the given conflict (Most conflicts cannot be reduced to two perspectives. What are the other perspectives?)
- Self-identification (Groups known as terrorists by some are considered freedom fighters by others. What is the difference between a freedom fighter and a terrorist?)

Conclusion/extension

- Now that they have a clearer concept of who is and is not a terrorist, according to the definition they developed, have students discuss the following:
- *Would the American Patriots be considered terrorists today? By whom? Why?* Have students apply their resolution of this question to other world regions to which the term “terrorism” has been applied:
 - Kashmir (India/Pakistan)
 - Chechnya (Russia)
 - Chiapas (Mexico)
- Note that in these and other situations, the less powerful side in a conflict is sometimes called “terrorist.” Students may want to debate this in conjunction with the principle of “might makes right.”
- Encourage students to discuss the following quote by Nelson Mandela: “Those people who are referring to many of us as terrorists are now dealing with us as members of responsible governments, and therefore terrorism is a relative term.”

Encourage students to find multiple perspectives on these conflicts that explore whether or not fighters are or are not terrorists. Resources can be found on-line (see “Useful websites” at the back of this packet).

LESSON 4

THE ROLE OF PROPAGANDA

Goal

Students will learn to apply critical questions to their consumption of various media representations, and will gain an understanding of some of the techniques and uses (both positive and negative) of “propaganda.”

Background

Major military conflicts must be fought on two grounds: on the battlefield and in the minds of the people. If the public does not support a war effort, it is probably doomed to failure (as this country learned in Vietnam). During wartime, all governments try to influence public opinion to support their actions. Sometimes this is done by forthright descriptions of truth and sometimes by selective or slanted information, which some call propaganda. Both sides do it, whether they are considered the “good guys” or the “bad guys.” Both attempt to influence their people with distortions, exaggerations, inaccuracy, and manipulation in order to receive support and a sense of legitimacy. Before they take military action, they make every attempt to justify it. For example, both Franklin D. Roosevelt and Winston Churchill did this before and during World War II. But that conflict was widely regarded as a “just war.” (Ask students to define the concept of a “just war,” and to cite examples.)

However, history has taught us that it is wrong to assume that power confers rationality. In fact, as Lord Acton wrote: “Power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely.” Totalitarian regimes with absolute power are almost always more corrupt and destructive than democratic societies with built-in checks and balances on government power. It is dangerous to think that being able to justify violence makes it acceptable. Many oppressive regimes have been quite sophisticated in their public relations and have convinced surprising majorities to go along with them. For example, Hitler was a master of propaganda in the years leading up to World War II, and had wide support from the German people. His chief filmmaker, Leni Riefenstahl, created powerful and inspiring films that rallied the German people behind their leader and his Nazi Party. They were classic propaganda.

Propaganda and Hollywood

Some people have said the events of 9/11 remind them of Hollywood films they have seen.

- Can you name any such films?
- If so, could any of these films be described as “propaganda”? Why or why not?
Can you think of any that involve terrorist plots against America?
- What is the basic formula of these films?
- What stereotypes do they generate?
- What values do they promote?
- Do such films tend to trivialize the reality of what happened on 9/11? Why/why not?

In the U.S. during World War II, Hollywood filmmakers also made many powerful pro-war movies that clearly inspired the American people and strengthened the nation’s resolve. President Bush has reportedly asked Hollywood filmmakers to assist in creating effective pro-American propaganda (to be used to “win over” citizens of Afghanistan and various peoples in the region), and movie industry personnel have agreed to do their part.

Some movie critics have noted that after many years of producing anti-war films during the Vietnam era (“Coming Home,” “The Deer Hunter,” “Born on the Fourth of July”), Hollywood has now begun turning out some pro-war films (“Blackhawk Down,” “We Were Soldiers,” “Hart’s War”). Are any of these films propaganda? Why or why not? If one of these is propaganda, who is it intended to influence, and why?

Jerry Bruckheimer, producer of “Black Hawk Down” and “Top Gun,” is now working with the Pentagon on a “reality TV” series entitled “Profiles from the Front Line.” Producer Bertram van Munster says the one-hour segments will have a “pro-military, pro-American spin” (*Newsweek*, March 4, 2002, p. 63). Will such a series blur the lines between reality and entertainment? Is this series propaganda? Why or why not?

What about the popular TV series, ‘West Wing,’ about a fictional liberal Democratic president? Does it blur the same lines? Is ‘West Wing’ propaganda? Why or why not? (See Peggy Noonan’s column in *The Wall Street Journal*: www.opinionjournal.com/columnists/pnoonan. Go to author archive: March 1, 2002).

Propaganda and the Military

Some critics say that even the titles given to military operations, such as “Enduring Freedom” or “Desert Storm,” constitute a type of propaganda meant to inspire patriotism. Do you agree? Why or why not?

The war in Afghanistan was initially labeled “Infinite Justice,” but the Pentagon dropped that name after some Islamic leaders objected, noting that only Allah can grant justice. Was that a good decision? Why or why not? Can you think of any other example from history where a nation changed the name of a military operation to avoid offending anyone? How might Americans react if another country declared war on the United States, naming the engagement “Infinite Justice” or the like?

What effect do such names have on average Americans? Our allies? Our enemies?

British journalist, Phillip Knightley, in *The First Casualty: The War Correspondent as Hero, Propagandist, and Mythmaker*, points out four stages in preparing for a war:

- 1) The crisis (in this case, the terrorist attacks) that makes war seem inevitable
- 2) The justification stage - the demonization of the enemy’s leader (in this case, Osama bin Laden)
- 3) The demonization of the enemy as individuals (for example, suggesting that the Al-Qaeda or the Taliban were cruel or deranged)
- 4) The atrocities (playing up stories that elicit emotional reactions – for example, *The New York Times*’ daily series of obituaries of all of the nearly 3,000 victims of the World Trade Center attacks).

Opening of the lesson

How do *you* define propaganda?

The word propaganda has negative connotations today, but the dictionary definition is actually quite neutral:

propaganda (noun) – 1. The systematic propagation of a given doctrine or of allegations reflecting its views and interests. 2. Material disseminated by the proselytizers of a doctrine.
— (*The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language*)

Today the term propaganda is often used to suggest slanted or selective information. What elements of the dictionary definition might support this use of the word (if any)?

Write the following quote on the board or overhead:

“Before the weapon comes the image ... Propaganda precedes technology.” – Sam Keen, Co-producer, PBS documentary, *Faces of the Enemy*. Ask students to discuss what they think this means.

There are some common tactics used in propaganda (as used for centuries). What might these include? (Record student responses.) Make sure the following all make it on the list:

- Using selective stories that narrow the focus
- Using partial facts or statements/images taken out of context
- Reinforcing reasons and motivations to act – playing on people’s fears and sense of security
- Demonizing the enemy, name-calling
- De-contextualizing violence (using words with blander meanings than the realities they describe)
- Excluding and omitting news of the dead, injured, displaced or bereaved
- Failing to explore proposals for peaceful outcomes
- Treating government statements as facts rather than sources/perspectives
- Treating outside critics’ statements as facts rather than sources/perspectives
- Narrowing the number of “expert” sources to support an agenda
- Labeling groups, people, or institutions in glowing terms (on the “home team”)
- Using symbols such as the flag and imagery of positive institutions such as the White House or the Capitol to gain acceptance
- Featuring “plain folks” as heroes to appeal to ordinary citizens
- Arguing that “everyone else” thinks this way (“join the bandwagon” effect)

Lesson

Their next task, working in groups of 2 – 4, will be to hunt for articles that demonstrate one or more of the propaganda techniques and fit into one of Knightley’s four stages. They should be looking for articles and editorials in the U.S. and the foreign press (to gain evidence of pro-Taliban or pro-Al Qaeda propaganda as well as pro-United States).

Ask students to think of turning points in the war on terrorism that fit into these four stages. They might think about speeches that President Bush (or British Prime Minister Tony Blair) gave immediately after September 11 as well as those given six months later. (For a March 11th speech given by President Bush, see text at: www.opinionjournal.com/extra?id=105001758.)

Encourage students to think about propaganda designed to promote a cause versus that designed to damage an opponent. As they collect both sides' propaganda, which purpose seems more common? Besides articles and editorials, students could also collect and discuss political cartoons.

Look for euphemisms like "collateral damage," "neutralize," "freedom fighters," "martyrs," "jihad," "fatwah," "The Great Satan" and "low impact" warfare.

For background information

- An "On the Media" interview (National Public Radio) November 10, 2001, was titled "Packaging Patriotism." Phillip Knightley talks about his propaganda checklist. The transcript is available at: www.wncv.org:2600/otm/transcripts_112401_propaganda.html
- There is also a CNN article titled: "Propaganda war may miss targets" available at: www.cnn.com/2001/US/10/21/ret.propaganda.war/index/html
- Also a Fox News article titled: "VOA Targets Anti-Semitic Arab Media" available at: <http://www.foxnews.com/story/o,2933,48293,00.html>

Discussion

- Is propaganda necessarily bad? Name some cases where it can be good.
- How does propaganda differ from a simple advertising campaign? In what ways?
- How does propaganda differ from a simple news report or an editorial column? In what ways?
- Do different cultures use propaganda differently? How do cultural values get highlighted through propaganda?
- If you were President Bush, Prime Minister Blair, Mullah Omar or Osama bin Laden, how would you have used propaganda and why?
- Critical discussion and debate are important principles in a functioning democracy. How can propaganda be used to discourage or narrow debate?
- How do you recognize propaganda in the media? How do you form critical opinions about it?

LESSON 5

THE MEDIA AND THE MILITARY

Goal

Students will analyze the role of both the media and the military in serving the common good. They will focus on how the public is informed during wartime. Students will acquire information from a variety of sources as preparation for a controversial issue discussion (in the form of a town meeting).

Background

After the Persian Gulf War, media and military leaders sat down together and agreed on a set of guidelines to be used in future conflicts. They adopted a Statement of Principles that tried to strike a balance between journalists' desire to know and report events and the military's desire to protect their troops and the success of the operations. It represented progress, if not perfection.

Another study by the Freedom Forum, jointly written by a journalist and an admiral, came up with recommendations on improving relations between the media and the military. However, the journalist co-author later wrote: "The military embraced it; the media ignored it."

However, it could be argued that the war on terrorism is different from all previous wars, a comparison that some extend to argue that the media should expect to cover this conflict differently from how past wars were covered. The enemy is extremely elusive, widely scattered, fiercely determined, and lethally destructive (especially if they obtain nuclear, chemical or biological weapons of mass destruction).

Since 9/11, the U.S. government has censored some of its presence on the Internet due to fears that terrorists might access government websites (like the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, the Environmental Protection Agency, the Federal Aviation Administration). The Pentagon has bought exclusive rights to commercial satellite imagery of Afghanistan, blocking the media from using these images (reported by Michael Gordon in *The New York Times*, October 19, 2001, pg. 2).

According to Neil Hickey, editor-at-large of the *Columbia Journalism Review* (January/February 2002 issue), "Journalists have been denied access to American troops in the field in Afghanistan to a greater degree than in any previous war involving American military forces." For example, the press may not be aboard aircraft making long-range bombing runs and seldom have an opportunity to interview pilots returning from their missions. They are not able to interview Special Operations forces after they perform operations in order to determine success or failure and learn the extent of casualties (civilian or military). Journalists have no independent contact with forces in Pakistan, Tajikistan and Oman. And, whereas in the Gulf War there was a Joint Information Bureau, there has not been a similar, centralized information center to provide journalists with guidance and facts in the region.

Hickey quoted Sandy Johnson, Associated Press Bureau Chief in Washington, who said in November that, “We have access to the Northern Alliance, we have access to the Taliban, we have practically zero access to American forces in the theater.”

However, in an interview with Hickey (excerpted in his article), Victoria Clarke, the Pentagon’s chief spokesperson, responded: “We said from the very beginning, and it’s been borne out, that this is a very unconventional war. We are up against people who don’t have armies and navies and air forces. We encouraged journalists to disabuse themselves of any notions that this would be like any previous conflicts – the Persian Gulf, for example, where you saw thousands of troops coursing across the desert. Also: given the fact that there was going to be a special, unique, and important role for Special Forces, there would be some things that nobody could or should ever see.”

Even so, Clarke acknowledged that “mistakes were made” in meeting the media’s needs and apologized for “severe shortcomings” in one case: On December 5, when a stray B-52 bomber killed three soldiers and wounded 19 others, reporters and photographers were confined to a warehouse (by commanders in the field) preventing them from speaking to rescuers, victims or medics.

On December 20, three photojournalists working for U.S. news outlets near Tora Bora were detained by Afghan forces, apparently at the request of U.S. forces (according to a *New York Times* report by Barry Bearak, 12/21/01, pg. 2).

Despite the restrictions on media mobility, by mid-December, more journalists – eight – than U.S. troops had been killed by hostile fire. Three journalists died when they took a risky nighttime ride in an armored personnel carrier with Northern Alliance forces. Four were killed by unknown gunmen, thought to be bandits, on a remote stretch of highway. And another was killed by armed robbers. Do those facts have any bearing on this issue?

Despite the extraordinary lengths many reporters are going to in order to get the story of the war in Afghanistan, much of the public seems to think that military success is more important than journalists’ “right to know.” A Gallup poll in mid-November gave an approval rating of 80% to Defense Secretary Rumsfeld for his handling of the war and a rating of 89% to President Bush. The news media had a meager 43% approval rating.

A Pew Research Center Poll showed 53% of those polled favored censorship of war news when national interest is involved, and 82% said they believed the Pentagon was divulging as much information as it could (about operations in Afghanistan). Pew also found, however, that 85% of respondents rated the media’s coverage of terrorism “excellent” or “good” in mid-October. And in mid-November, Pew found “a major increase in favorable opinions of the press for accuracy of reporting, professionalism, morality, patriotism, and caring about the people it covers,” according to Andrew Kohut, director of the Pew Research Center (“The Press Shines at a Dark Moment, *Columbia Journalism Review*, January /February 2002).

Of course, poll results are not permanent facts; conducting a poll is like checking a pulse or taking a snapshot. It represents an isolated, temporal response, and multiple factors could impact the answer (including how the question was phrased and what possible range of responses was offered). Still, polls have become an important element in charting American public opinion.

And the mixed results may show that most Americans recognize that the media-military relationship is of necessity a tense one. As Victoria Clarke told a seminar of journalists: “We should accept the fact that some healthy tension is a good thing. Providing for the common defense is in the Preamble to the Constitution, and the rights of the press are in the First Amendment. Those two things are so important that it is probably valuable that there is this healthy tension.” Ideally, the good-faith tension between the government’s aspirations and those of the press work to serve the common good of the public. To observe the tension first hand, ask students to watch one of the Pentagon’s daily press briefings where Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, Victoria Clarke and others answer questions from reporters.

Opening of the lesson

Write the following on the board or overhead and ask students to respond:

“In wartime, truth is so precious that she should always be attended by a bodyguard of lies.”
- Winston Churchill (British Prime Minister during World War II)

“Information is the currency of victory.”
- U.S. Army field manual (#100-6, August 1996)

Ask students to comment or free-write for 5 – 10 minutes.

Point out to students that while media reports are rather transitory, the military is a permanent institution. It has the benefit of long-term strategizing, often based on lessons learned in previous conflicts. The military, having endured some bad press in previous wars – particularly the Vietnam War – today plans its media strategy with almost as much care as its military strategy, and in many cases its military strategy is tied to a media strategy aimed at swaying opinion both at home and in the international press.² The military walks a fine line between providing information to the public through the press, and trying to control the media through such means as offering daily press briefings and providing limited access to war zones, always guided by military personnel. The media try to “get the story” however they can, sometimes by circumventing military guidelines (even those made for their own protection).

Students will be engaged in a very real-life controversy: the military seek to present information that will support a military campaign and protect the lives of troops while journalists seek to learn what’s happening, be independent and skeptical, and not necessarily accept the official “line.” So while the media (at its best) aims to seek, find and report the truth, this may be incompatible with successful warfare, which sometimes depends on secrecy and deception – especially in a war against terrorism where clandestine operations are a fact of life.

² One example being the recent creation and subsequent dismantling of the “Office of Strategic Influence” within the Department of Defense, described in one proposal to include “aggressive campaigns that used the foreign news media and the Internet, plus covert operations.” Classified briefings stated that the office “should find ways to ‘coerce’ foreign journalists and opinion makers and ‘punish’ those who convey the wrong message.” (*New York Times*, February 27, 2002, p.A1)

Lesson

Students will participate in a town meeting. They will contemplate these questions:

How important is the truth in covering a war?

Does it matter that the war on terrorism is more difficult to report because of its vague and broad scope?

In preparation, students will need to gain information from a variety of sources (using the website list provided).

Steps to prepare

- Have students sign up for roles by brainstorming the various stakeholders: journalists, military generals, enlisted personnel and their family members, concerned citizens, peace activists and humanitarian aid workers, etc.
(Try to maintain a balance of perspectives, to ensure a lively discussion.)
- Give students 1 – 2 class periods to locate and take notes on their perspective.
- Arrange the chairs in a circle on the day of the meeting, with no students on the outside (unless they were absent, in which case, they'll be reporters covering the discussion). Place a "table tent" (folded construction paper) in front of each student identifying their role.
- Let students know they will be scored on content knowledge, ability to effectively assume their assigned perspective, and overall participation.

Consider collecting written comments from students, to ensure that those who do not contribute often get some credit (if they came prepared).

You might want to have the class listen to (or read the transcript of) an "On the Media" interview (National Public Radio) November 10, titled "Who's Side is the Media On? The Devil's?" It features an interview with Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld and a Marine Lieutenant General. The transcript is available at: www.wncy.org:2600/otm/transcripts_111001_bigidea.html

Another "On the Media" (dated October 27, 2001) is titled "Decoding the Pentagon" and is found at: www.wncy.org:2600/otm/transcripts_102701_pentagon.html

A videotape of the Washington News Council's Public Forum (October 1, 2001) on "The News Media During Wartime: What are Journalists' Rights and Responsibilities?" is available by calling (206) 262-9793. The lively panel featured Joel Connelly of *The Seattle P-I*, former U.S. Senator Slade Gorton, and Lt. Gen. James T. Hill, commanding general at Fort Lewis.

A panel discussion on "The Military and the Media" was held on March 26, 2002, at the National Press Club, sponsored by the Freedom Forum and the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund. It was broadcast on C-SPAN. For details on how to view online or order a videotape, see <http://inside.c-spanarchives.org:8080/cspan.csp?command=dprogram&record=155379363>.

Extensions

Look at the issue of civilian casualties – how different organizations (news, military and humanitarian relief) are offering different numbers. For a good background article on the Pentagon’s role in possibly stalling an actual count, and on denying mistakes (that may have been dismissed as “enemy propaganda”), look at *The New York Times* article: “Mistakes upset careful calculus of war: Pentagon slow to probe claims U.S. is killing Afghan civilians,” Feb. 9, 2002.

Look at the Associated Press stories that resulted from the first independent effort of its kind to tally the actual number of civilian casualties by reviewing hospital records and interviewing eyewitnesses. The AP concluded that the number was about 500 to 600 – much lower than claims by the Taliban or estimates by critics of American military action. (*The Week*, Feb. 15-21, 2002, p. 2)

Look at timelines of September 11 and its aftermath (there is one extensive timeline included in the February 2002 issue of *Social Education*, pgs. 25, 27, 28) and note how the events listed – by including some and excluding others – fulfill a certain agenda. Invite students to look at other timelines presented in the media, in textbooks, etc. From whose perspective is the timeline created?

Look at “The Civilian Casualty Conundrum – Searching for an Elusive Number,” by Lucinda Fleeson in *American Journalism Review*, April 2002 (www.ajr.org).

UNIT VOCABULARY

Audience = the group of consumers for whom a media product is created, plus anyone else who is exposed to it.

Burqua (or burka) = veil, the head-to-toe covering with a mesh grid over the eyes. Required garb for all women during the Taliban regime.

Connotation = a description of value, meaning or ideology associated with a media text.

Construct = (Verb) the process by which a media text is shaped and given meaning (considering target audience and purpose). (Noun) a fictional or documentary text that appears to reflect reality but is, in fact, manipulated to appear real.

Critical = a reflective position, taking into consideration the bias and value orientation of a media product. The ability to use critical thinking skills to question, analyze and understand issues that may be up front or hidden.

Deconstruction = identifying and breaking down the elements that construct meaning in the media.

Demographics = recognizable characteristics of media consumers, like age, gender, education or income level.

Discourse = speech or language; conversation, communication.

Discrimination = the creation of unfavorable distinctions between one group of people and another, often because of characteristics like race, gender, religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status or class. It can take the form of overt, individual action or more systematic (and covert or hidden) institutional or governmental action.

Disinformation = spreading rumors to discredit the enemy, which eventually turn out to be false.

Euphemism = substituting a delicate or pleasing expression in place of a negative, indelicate expression.

Genre = a category of media texts characterized by a particular style, form or content.

Hajj = annual Muslim pilgrimage to Mecca.

Ideology = how we, as individuals, understand or make sense of the world in which we live. It involves beliefs and values instilled in us by family, religion, government, etc.

Jihad = Holy War, according to Islam.

Mass Media = those media that are to be consumed by large audiences through wide distribution.

Media = the plural form of medium, used to encompass all forms of mass communication.

Media Literacy = the process of understanding and using the mass media in an assertive and non-passive way. This includes an informed, critical understanding of the role the media play and the techniques used to impact audiences.

Medium = the form of media used, such as radio, television, film, Internet, newspaper, leaflet.

Ministry for the Promotion of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice (“the Religious Police”) = those who enforced Taliban restrictions against women and others through means that included arbitrary (unjustified) violence.

Mujahadin = “Those who struggle.” In Afghanistan, the term refers to the forces that fought Soviet-backed regimes (and were supported by the United States then).

Narrative = how the plot or story is told; the sequencing of events for desired effect.

Prejudice = feelings or attitudes a person holds onto despite contrary available evidence or experience. Could include

Production values = the quality of media production proportional to the money and technology spent on the product.

Racism = the assumption of superiority of one group to the detriment of other racial groups. It could be conscious or unconscious.

Representation = the use of media to symbolize or represent people, places, events or ideas that are real and have an existence outside the media product.

Sharia (or **shariat**) = Islamic law.

Stereotyping = basing an assumption that because an individual or group possess one attribute (such as religion or gender) that they are similar in many others. Stereotyping results in oversimplified beliefs, attitudes or uncritical judgments, and can lead to prejudice against a particular group based on misperceptions.

USEFUL WEBSITES

If you have limited time, here are the **top news sites** to visit for a range of perspectives:

★ Links to News Media Worldwide: www.newslink.org
Links to newspapers, TV and radio stations in U.S. and other countries.

★ World Press Review: www.worldpress.org/index.shtm
International articles that are balanced and condensed enough for friendly classroom use.

★ Daily Earth: www.dailyearth.com
Global directory of online newspapers in U.S. and around the world. When you go to a country, it opens with a link to the CIA Factbook and a list of papers (daily, weekly, English specified) linked; very comprehensive.

★ World Affairs Council: www.world-affairs.org/Resources/international_resources.htm
WAC website has links to English language newspapers around the world.

★ Today's Papers: www.slate.msn.com
Daily summaries of top stories and editorials from U.S. and international papers, with links. Some great links, including one on Afghanistan war propaganda – has a leaflet slideshow including leaflets dropped by both sides during WWII! (Screen first, for appropriateness.)

★ The Drudge Report: www.drudgereport.com
Daily selection of top stories from various U.S. and world sources, plus links to media worldwide. Scroll down under the teaser story and go right to the search box with headline and type in topic. Good links to a wide range of reports.

★ = recommended

OTHER HELPFUL NEWS SITES

Ultimate Collection of News Links: www.pppp.net/links/news
Newspaper and magazine sites from all over the world.

Online Newspapers: www.onlinenewspapers.com
Easy-to-use links to newspapers around the globe. Be warned that these aren't necessarily reputable news organizations, as the links include on-line opinion forums, which may be interesting but difficult to validate.

The World Tribune: www.worldtribune.com
Daily Internet newspaper with stories from various international sources. Need to register to use.

International Herald Tribune: www.iht.com
Daily worldwide newspaper combining resources of *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post*. Has video segments, and a world map showing location of the story.

Newspapers Worldwide: www.netpapers.com
Links to "5,538 newspapers in 183 countries" around the world, updated daily and weekly.
Go to "Middle East" rather than search box. Has links to variety, including CAMERA (Committee for Accuracy in Middle East Reporting in America), a pro-Israeli viewpoint.

Audio and Video Services: www.gwis2.circ.gwu.edu
Links to radio and television broadcasts (streaming and archived) in U.S. and worldwide.

Michael Holloway, Bainbridge High School teacher, has created a website with links to news outlets worldwide at: www.bainbridge.wednet.edu. Go to: ssdept.

Newspapers U.S. and worldwide:
www.refdesk.com/paper.html

Coverage and resources from US News and World Report:
www.usnews.com/usnews/briefings/terror0901.htm

"The Day the World Changed"
www.economist.com/opinion/displayStory.cfm?Story_ID=780341

"ALTERNATIVE" & OTHER VOICES

"We Need the Rule of Law, Not the rule of War"
www.boston.com/dailyglobe/2/258/oped/We_need_the_rule_of_law_not_the_rule_of_warP.html

Media Alliance: www.media-alliance.org
Article: "Who will count the Dead? U.S. Media Fail to Report civilian Casualties in Afghanistan" at www.media-alliance.org/mediafile/20-5/index.html

Electronic Frontier Foundation: "Chilling Effects of Anti-Terrorism: National Security Toll on Freedom of Expression" www.eff.org/Privacy/Surveillance/Terrorism_militias/antiterrorism_chill.html

www.indymedia.org.

★ www.alternet.org
Good article on propaganda called "Stop the Presses" by Alan Pittman of the Eugene Weekly, 11/21/01. Go to: www.alternet.org/story.html?StoryID=11955

<http://slate.msn.com>

Has reports and editorials about the U.S. anti-terror campaign at: slate.msn.com/?id=2062022
Including an article Feb. 13, 2002, titled "What to do about rumors of Afghan civilian deaths."

www.commondreams.org

www.mojones.com

www.thenation.com

www.theweeklystandard.com

www.nationalreview.com

www.opinionjournal.com

★ www.theeconomist.com

www.rabble.ca

★ www.salon.com

Article titled: "Why the U.S. is losing the propaganda war" at www.salon.com/tech/feature/2001/10/12/propaganda/index.html

"An Afghan-American Speaks

www.salon.com/news/feature/2001/09/14/afghanistan/

The UTNE Reader:

www.utne.com

"What Does Retaliation Mean in a Media War?"

www.tompaine.com/opinion/2001/02/12/1.html

MEDIA ANALYSIS & CRITICISM

★ Columbia Journalism Review: www.cjr.org

Monthly magazine published by Columbia University's Graduate School of Journalism. Great reports on media literacy issues. Has an article on the various ways 10 mid-sized and regional daily papers have been covering the crisis (including *The Seattle Times*) at www.cjr.org/year/02/1/giuffoandlipton.asp

Also has an article titled: "Beyond Afghanistan: Foreign News: What's Next?" which describes how most news organizations failed to cover the danger posed to the United States by global terrorism (despite the fact that readers and viewers consistently cited this as their biggest foreign policy concern). Go to: www.cjr.org/year/02/1/parks.asp.

Online Journalism Review: www.ojr.org

Updated daily by Annenberg School of Communications at University of Southern California.

Mickey Kaus website: www.kausfiles.com

Opinionated and irreverent daily online critique of the world of media and journalism.

★ Media Awareness - source of curriculum (produced with UNICEF) and information on media literacy.
www.media-awareness.ca/eng/med/class/unicef/media/activ

Media Channel: www.mediachannel.org

Opinionated nonprofit public-interest website dedicated to global media issues.

NewsWatch: www.newswatch.org

Links to key media news and criticism sites, plus academic and institutional media watchdogs.

Online News Association: www.journalists.org

Website of the association of professional online journalists; promotes excellence and ethics.

Cyber Journalists: www.cyberjournalist.net

Tips and talk for online writers and editors; commentary on how Internet affects journalism.

Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting: www.fair.org

Liberal national media watchdog group highly critical of conservative media bias.

Media Research Center: www.mrc.org

Conservative national media watchdog group highly critical of liberal media bias.

Accuracy in Media: www.aim.org

Conservative national media watchdog group highly critical of liberal media bias.

Online NewsHour: www.pbs.org/newshour/media/

Website of PBS' NewsHour with Jim Lehrer, with media analyst Terence Smith.

★ NPR's "On the Media"

www.wnyc.org/new/talk/onthemedialot/index.html

★ "The Language of Media Literacy: A Glossary of terms"

www.media-awareness.ca/eng/med/class/support/mediacy/general/glossar.htm

Center for Media and Public Affairs: www.cmpa.com.

Seattle independent media center: <http://seattle.indymedia.org>

JOURNALISTS' ORGANIZATIONS & RESOURCES

Committee of Concerned Journalists:

www.journalism.org/ccj

Reporters, editors, producers, publishers, owners and academics worried about the profession.

CPJ Press Freedom Reports from around the world:

Has a good article titled "Between Two Worlds: Qatar's Al-Jazeera satellite channel faces conflicting expectations." At www.cpj.org/Briefings/2001/aljazeera_oct01/aljazeera_oct01.html

Project for Excellence in Journalism:

www.journalism.org/about

Initiative by journalists to "clarify and raise the standards of American journalism."

The Freedom Forum: www.freedomforum.org

Nonpartisan foundation dedicated to "free press, free speech and free spirit for all people."

The Poynter Institute: www.poynter.org

Respected "think tank" for journalists, with good links to other media websites.

Society of Professional Journalists: www.spj.org

National organization to protect free press, promote excellence and ethics in journalism.

Society of Professional Journalists, Western Washing-

ton Pro Chapter: www.spjwash.org

Regional chapter of SPJ, active in Puget Sound region and west of the Cascades.

Online Resources: www.journalism.berkeley.edu/weblinks

Links to wide range of sites, by New Media Program at UC Berkeley Graduate School of Journalism.

Pew Research Center for the People and the Press:

www.people-press.org

Independent opinion research group; studies attitudes toward press, politics and public policy.

Washington News Council: www.wanewscouncil.org

Independent, nonprofit citizens' organization whose mission is to promote fairness, accuracy and balance in the news media in Washington State.

FROM THE MIDDLE EAST & CENTRAL ASIA

Al-Jazeera, located in Qatar, calls itself the only independent news source in what was Taliban-controlled Afghanistan: www.al-jazeera.net. To defenders, it's a reliable, professional and informative news source. To critics, it has been a propaganda tool for Osama bin Laden. (This is the channel that broadcast bin Laden's messages to the world.) Colin Powell has urged Qatar's emir to lighten up on the anti-American bias. But many in the region say this violates our own priority on freedom of speech and press, as this is the only "independent" news source there.

Afghan News Network: www.myafghan.com

Lemar-Aaftab Afghan Magazine:

www.afghanmagazine.com

Afghan Info Center: www.afghan-info.com

Arabic News: www.arabicnews.com

Council on American-Islamic Relations: www.cair-net.org

The Jerusalem Post: www.jpost.com

The Jordan Times: www.jordantimes.com

Good source of editorials and general coverage.

Media Line: www.themedialine.org

News and analysis about Israel and the Middle East.

Middle East Network Information Center

<http://link.lanac.utexas.edu/menic/>

Middle East Media Research Institute (MEMRI):

www.memri.org

An independent, nonprofit organization providing translations of Arabic and Farsi media, plus analysis and research.

Middle East Newslines: www.menewslines.com

Defense news service by independent journalists based throughout region. Focus on Israel's military, strategic programs and relations with its neighbors. Aim is "to address two issues to our clients: the defense market in the Middle East and threats that drive weapons sales."

www.Indiainfo.com has an article titled: "U.S. accused of launching propaganda war" 12/25/99 (so pre-9/11) at: www.indianinfo.com/news/1999/12/25/taliban.html

Information Resources for Islamic, Middle Eastern and Near Eastern Studies

www.library.ucsb.edu/subj/neareast.html

Middle East Times: www.metimes.com
http://www.metimes.com/2k1/issue2001-37/opinion/opin_index.htm

Muslim Public Affairs Council: www.mpac.org

The Frontier Post from Peshawar, Pakistan
www.frontierpost.com.pk/afghan.asp

Syria Times: www.teshreen.com/syriatimes/

Dubai, United Arab Emirates, Khaleej Times Home Page
www.khaleejtimes.com

MUSLIM COUNTRY REACTIONS to 9/11

“What the Papers Say in the Middle East”:
www.guardian.co.uk/wtcrash/story/0,1300,551050,00.html

Denunciations of the attack from Muslim political leaders:
www.npr.org/ramfiles/me/20010912.me.11.ram

Reactions from North Africa:
<http://allafrica.com/stories/200109120327.html>
<http://allafrica.com/northafrica/>

Anthropological take on fundamentalism (background):
www.brown.edu/Departments/Anthropology/publications/FUNDMNTALISM.htm

LESSON PLANS

★ “Consider the Source: Comparing news coverage about the Taliban regime from around the world” (Grades 6-8, 9-12): www.nytimes.com/learning/teachers/lessons/20010926wednesday.html

GENERAL BACKGROUND

★ Global Issues: www.globalissues.org
Excellent analyses of topics like: War, Propaganda and the Media; Children, Conflicts and the Military; International Criminal Court

★ “Understanding the Conflict” – the October 15, 2001, 12-page special print section of *The Seattle Times* has an accompanying, enriched web version at: <http://seattletimes.nwsources.com/news/nation-world/crisis/>
There’s a section on U.S. foreign policy, focusing on the past American actions that may have played a part in the conflict, interactive maps, videos of key events, and a discussion guide to help parents/teachers. It has been applauded for the absence of “us versus them” rhetoric.

“At That Time, Over in Japan” is a program compiled to demonstrate Japan’s response to the 9/11 attacks and features opinions of ordinary citizens and intellectuals from both U.S. and Japan. Details available at: www.mofa.go.jp/j_info/access/index.html

POTENTIAL CONTACT

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