

For Instructors: Teaching Media & News Literacy at CSUDH

Fairness and Balance (video + discussion)

In class or for homework, watch the video “Fairness and Balance” (2 min.)

<https://youtu.be/hHc019S2yiM>

Video discussion questions:

- Where do you get your news? Do you actively seek out news or do you mostly encounter news through social media?
- According to the video, what are some examples of journalistic standards?
- Why is a fair and balanced representation of the news important?

Teaching online or don't have time in class?

Assign the Fairness and Balance quiz: <https://csudh.libwizard.com/f/fairness-balance>

- ✱ Students can upload a certificate of completion to Blackboard that includes their responses to the video discussion questions.

Ask students to complete one of the following tutorials:

- **Lateral Reading** - Focuses on fact-checking and identifying bias.
<https://csudh.libwizard.com/f/lateral-reading>
- **Evaluating Information** - Focuses on evaluating online sources based on an information need, audience, purpose, evidence, etc.
<https://csudh.libwizard.com/f/evaluating-information>

- ✱ Students can upload a certificate of completion that shows they have learned by taking the tutorial and answered all questions correctly after feedback and multiple attempts.

Anatomy of a News Website (video + assignment)

In class or for homework, watch the video “Anatomy of a News Website” (3 min. 15 sec.)

<https://youtu.be/76DdkDGQ7jU>. Then, have students reflect and respond to the following questions in a discussion board forum.

Reflection questions:

- Did anything surprise you about how the news is made?
- How do editorial decisions factor into how you consume news?
- As a reader, how do you feel about advertisements and sponsored content?

Newseum Ed “Is it Fair?” (video, infographic, + lesson plan)

Requires a free account to view all materials. Includes a video on journalistic standards and an activity using a “fairness meter” handout where students can rate news sources on a scale of very biased to very fair. A practice example and suggested news articles are also included.

<https://newseumed.org/is-it-fair>

Assignment Ideas:

- Ask students to review the “Anatomy of a News Website” [video](#), [infographic](#), and a newspaper article on a current topic. Then, ask students to submit a short, written assignment or discussion board forum addressing the following questions. How does the photo contribute to the understanding of the story? Do the byline or photo caption provide any additional information they might use to evaluate the article? Consider providing popular historical examples of misleading photo captions for students to analyze (e.g. <https://www.latimes.com/nation/la-na-harvey-20170829-story.html>).
- Have students create a research log where they record information on how they laterally evaluate websites as part of their research process.
- Compile a list of at least 3 provocative claims and have students imagine they are professional fact checkers for a news organization. Using the "[Four Moves & a Habit](#)" [handout](#) as a guide, have them analyze and reach a conclusion about each claim. What criteria did they use? How did they justify their responses? Any contentious or highly debated topics can be used as a springboard for class discussion.

Examples of topics might include:

- climate change
 - gun rights
 - policing
 - freedom of speech and censorship
 - voting rights
 - reproductive rights
 - immigration reform
- Ask students to examine how a contentious topic is covered via social media platforms (e.g. Twitter, Instagram, TikTok or Facebook). Have them identify two tweets/posts/videos that make competing claims. Ask students to analyze their claim using the "[Four Moves & a Habit](#)" [handout](#).
- Choose a controversial topic and pull 4 articles: two credible U.S. newspapers, one from a lobbyist organization, and another from a highly polarized commentary website. For example, if the topic is gun control you might use the NRA, Breitbart, or InfoWars. Break up the class into groups of at least 3 students each and assign each group an article. Either within the class session or as a take home group assignment, have each group identify the article’s major claim. Using the skills they learned from the Lateral Reading tutorial, have them argue in favor or against the validity of their source. Come together as a class to discuss.