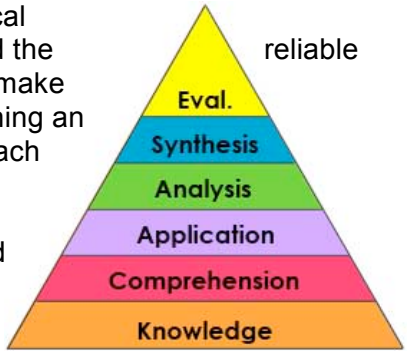
Lecture Section #3:
Day and Time
Lecture Hall and Room Number
(Recitation Hall and Room Number
Day and Time
Professor Name
Instructor Name_____

I. Purpose of the course:

This course is designed to teach students how to take skillful possession of their power as citizens by becoming perceptive news consumers. Armed with critical-thinking skills, a firm grasp of relevant history and practical knowledge about news media, students learn how to find the reliable information they need to make decisions, take action or make judgments. At a time when the digital revolution is spawning an unprecedented flood of information and disinformation each day, the course seeks to help students recognize the differences between news and propaganda, news and opinion, bias and fairness, assertion and verification, and evidence and inference.



II. Intended Outcomes:

· Analyze the key elements of a news account, including weight of evidence, credibility of sources and of context, to judge its reliability.
· Distinguish between news and opinion and analyze the logic/rhetoric employed in opinion journalism.
· Identify and distinguish between news media bias and audience bias.
· Blend personal scholarship and course materials to write forcefully about news media standards and practices, as well as First Amendment issues and issues of fairness and bias.
· Connect current news accounts to universal concepts of community and citizenship.
· Assess the impact of digital information technologies and place them in their historical context.

III. Required texts:

"The Elements of Journalism: What Newspeople Should Know and the Public Should Expect," Kovach and Rosenstiel.

"News Literacy JRN101-B/103-G" digital textbook; (purchase at campus bookstore and use the code to register at www.xanedu.com). Do not buy a used course pack from a previous semester. It's been updated and changed.

IV. News Literacy's main textbook is each day's news, whether you read, watch or listen
News Literacy students follow the news every day and participate in an online discussion board that is the basis for the news quiz. Keeping up with news makes it possible to finish homework assigned to you.

V. Course Requirements:
1. Prerequisites: none
2. Attendance: If circumstances prevent your attending class, the instructor must be informed by email on or before the day of class or within 24 hours afterward. Two unexcused absences are permitted. A third or fourth such absence results in a 1/3 grade drop per absence, (e.g. from B to B-). Five can result in an F. Consistent tardiness also reduces your grade.
3. Blackboard(tm): This course is run from Blackboard(tm), where you'll find your homework assignments, SafeAssignment™ submission link and discussion/blog sites.

4. Alertness: Because the course often changes in reaction to breaking news, you must check Blackboard(tm) daily. To ensure you receive all alerts, the email address you routinely use should be entered on Blackboard(tm) in the "Personal Information" section under "Tools" in the top left box on the " Welcome" page. Student Help Desk is at 631-632-9602.
5. Special considerations: If you have a physical, psychological, medical or learning disability that may impact your course work, please contact Disability Support Services, 128 ECC Building (631) 632-6748. They will determine with you what accommodations are necessary and appropriate. All information and documentation is confidential. Students who require assistance during emergency evacuation are encouraged to discuss their needs with their professors and Disability Support Services. For procedures and information go to the following web site: http://www.stonybrook.edu/ehs/fire/disabilities.shtml
6. Deadlines: All work is due on time. You must upload your homework to SafeAssignment (a plagiarism checker on the Blackboard(tm) site) prior to your class meeting. Some instructors also require a printed copy. Students, not instructors, print out papers. Work that fails to meet deadline loses one full grade. After one week, the student receives a 0.

7. Assignments: You will have several assignments each week: readings, videos, films and other materials to help you understand the course concepts. Written assignments require you to do research, additional reading, or evaluate a news report.

On Blackboard(tm) you'll find homework folders labeled by week which contain homework instructions and links to web articles and videos that you are required to read or analyze. Due dates are announced in lecture and via Blackboard(tm). Although your lecture and recitation instructors will make every effort to give you advance notice of upcoming assignments, your failure to regularly check Blackboard(tm) is not an acceptable excuse for missing a deadline. If your lecturer and recitation instructor are not the same person, contact your recitation instructor with questions about an assignment.

Written homework is submitted via Blackboard(tm)™ except when your instructor specifies otherwise. You will be graded on how well you articulate an understanding of the course

material, support it with examples from readings, and how you express your own ideas. As a result, your grade may depend on your ability to write with clarity and logic. Comply with the directions for word length, stay relevant, and always provide specific examples or evidence to support your argument. The SBU Writing Center provides helpful assistance to students willing to act on expert advice: 632-7405.

The written homework assignments represent 40 percent of your final grade. You read that correctly. 40%. Here are the standards for homework:

Superior	Dramatically surpasses the requirements, well-written, demonstrates additional insights or research	Maximum 4 points
Good	Exceeds requirements, written clearly and logically	Maximum 3 points
Satisfactory	Meets minimum requirements, expresses ideas in a manner that can be understood	Maximum 2 points
Poor	Does not meet requirements, confusing or unclear, sloppy	Maximum 1 point
Failed to hand in	No credit	No points

8. Participation and Quizzes: You will be graded on how well you prepare for class, follow the news and engage in class discussions and debates. You will also be quizzed throughout the semester except for test days. Quiz questions will cover current events, the previous week's lecture and any other material you have been assigned. Quizzes reward you for following the news and reinforce concepts you're learning in class.

9. Extra Homework Credits: During the semester, the School of Journalism will present a series of special weeknight programs called "My Life As…" during which noteworthy journalists speak about their work and answer questions from students. Students who swipe their ID cards at the door receive two extra homework points for each lecture they attend.

During the semester, you will have additional opportunities to earn extra credit. Extra credit points are applied to the homework portion of your final grade. Students may earn a maximum of eight extra credit points.

9. Communicating with your recitation instructor: If you have a general question about the course, the assignments or the lecture you may want to post your question in the discussions link available through your recitation site on Blackboard(tm). For specific questions about your particular grade, you must make an appointment to talk with your instructor in person or by phone during his or her office hours.

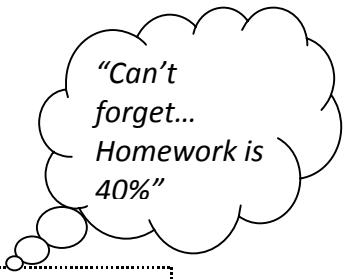
10. Plagiarism and cheating: Any form of plagiarism or cheating will be reported to the Academic Judiciary Committee and can result in a failing grade for the course. Here is the University's statement on academic dishonesty: "Plagiarism is the use of others' words and/or ideas without clearly acknowledging their source. As students, you are learning about other people's ideas in your course texts, your instructors' lectures, in-class discussions, and when

doing your own research. When you incorporate those words and ideas into your own work, it is of the utmost importance that you give credit where it is due. Plagiarism, intentional or unintentional, is considered academic dishonesty and all instances will be reported to the Academic Judiciary. To avoid plagiarism, you must give the original author credit whenever you use another person's ideas, opinions, drawings, or theories as well as any facts or any other pieces of information that are not common knowledge. Additionally, quotations of another person's actual spoken or written words; or a close paraphrasing of another person's spoken or written words must also be referenced. Accurately citing all sources and putting direct quotations – of even a few key words – in quotation marks are required. For further information on academic integrity and the policies regarding academic dishonesty, go to the Academic Judiciary Web site at http://naples.cc.sunysb.edu/CAS/ajc.nsf. We further add that you must cite all sources used in writing your assignments."

Other examples of cheating include: Copying answers or assignments from someone else or allowing someone to copy from you. Cheating in any form on an exam. Collaboration (without instructor preapproval) or multiple submissions of the same work. Fabricating or altering an excuse note. Making up quotes, facts or references.

11. Disruptive Behavior: "Stony Brook expects students to maintain standards of personal integrity that are in harmony with the educational goals of the institution; to observe national, state, and local laws and University regulations; and to respect the rights, privileges, and property of other people. Faculty is required to report disruptive behavior that interrupts faculty's ability to teach, the safety of the learning environment, and/or students' ability to learn to Judicial Affairs."

12. Electronic Devices. See your recitation instructor for his or her policy. In general, phones should be put away and laptops used only for note-taking.



VI. Calculating Final Grades: Final grades are weighted as follows:

Homework Assignments	40 Percent- Total HW score is curved
Final Exam and Essay	30 Percent
Tests	20 Percent
Participation and Quizzes	5+5 Percent- Total Quiz score is curved

You won't earn more points by writing longer than assigned. Comply with the directions for word length, write succinctly, stay relevant, and always provide specific examples or evidence to support your point.

Important: Only semester grades of C or above count for credit toward the journalism major or minor. Any student earning a C-minus or below who intends to continue in the journalism program must retake the class and will not be able to continue in other journalism skills classes.

VII. School of Journalism Grading Schema:

A : 93 and above
A-: 90-92
B+: 87-89
B : 83-86
B-: 80-82
C+: 77-79
C : 73-76
C-: 70-72
D+: 67-69
D : 60-66
F : 59 and below

VIII. Class Schedule: Our advantage in this 90-student section of News Literacy, is that we aren't bound by the traditional Lecture/Recitation structure. Consequently, if class discussion is productive, we may extend one lesson into the next.

Lecture	Recitation
Week 1: Jan 23-27	
L1: Why News Literacy Matters: From 'Berg to 'Berg An introduction and overview of the course, highlighted by a multi-media show of coming attractions, including examples of timely print and broadcast stories that illustrate why news literacy matters to students – and society. We define "the news media," and put the course in the context of the accelerating communications revolution. Students leave this class with an understanding of the course's goals and the core definition of News Literacy: The ability to judge the credibility and reliability of news reports -- and why that matters to them.	**R1: What the Public Thinks of the News Media and Why** Students discuss their "news blackout" experiences as well as the results of the student media survey. Class focuses on where and how students get their news, with discussion of which news sources the students will use during the semester. How do students view the news media? How does it compare with the general public's view? What's the source of the public's current unease? Is it justified? What's a news consumer to do?
Week 2: Jan. 30-Feb.3	
L2: The Power of Information We explore the universal need to receive and share information and the function news has played in every recorded society: To alert, to connect and to divert. We examine the role technology has played in amplifying information – from smoke signals to television – and how this also has enabled the sender to control the news. This leads to a broader discussion of how information is power and why there is a global battle for information control. Students leave this class with a clear understanding of why there is a need for a free flow of	**R2: The Battle Over Information** The class examines timely examples in the news of the struggle for information control. What is the conflict in China really about? Are executives with Google or Yahoo right in agreeing to operate within China's designated rules? Does the United States government try to control news? The class ends with an introduction to other categories of information beyond news and propaganda.

information and why some people are willing to kill (and journalists are willing to die) in the battle to control information.	
Week 3: Feb. 6-10	
L3: The Mission of the American Press This class looks at the philosophical and practical underpinnings of a free press in America and the ongoing tension in a democracy between the press and the government. We examine the First Amendment and what freedom of the press really means, looking at landmark Supreme Court cases (*Near vs. Minnesota, Pentagon Papers and others).* We examine the role of the press in wartime, issues of censorship and press responsibility and the role of the press as a "watchdog."	**R3**: **National Security Case study:** Did *The New York Times* act responsibility or commit treason in disclosing Operation Swift? Is Wikileaks protected by the First Amendment? Students debate which principle takes precedence: national security or the public's right to know. They conduct a mock trial of the *Times*' reporters or of WikiLeaks.
Week 4 Feb. 13-17	
L4: Know Your Neighborhood – What Makes Journalism Different What makes journalism different from other kinds of information? The first rule for a smart news consumer is this: Always know what information "neighborhood" you're in. This lecture explores the differences between news, propaganda, publicity, advertising, entertainment and raw information. Students begin work on a Taxonomy of Information Neighborhoods. In the journalism neighborhood, a news consumer should always find three key values: verification, independence and accountability. But the lines on the grid are blurring, often by design, and it's easy to be deceived as to what journalism is and who is a journalist. The class watches Video News Releases, war "coverage" on YouTube and Jon Stewart.	**R4: The Blurring of the Lines** Students complete and review the Taxonomy of Information Grid. Students debate whether Jon Stewart is a journalist and whether a consumer can find reliable news reports on YouTube.
Week 5: Feb. 20-24	
L5: What Is News and Who Decides? What makes some information news? This class examines news drivers, news values and how	**R5: You Are the Editor:** Students decide what to put on the front page of the "*SB World*." After an examination of the types of issues editors

the news process works. What is the decision-making process that determines whether a story gets published or broadcast? Who decides? How do editors balance the interesting and the important? What is "news play," or presentation, and why does it matter? What is proportionality? What is sensationalism? Are news decisions driven by the profit motive or social responsibility or some combination of the two? Students examine the question of whether there is too much bad news.	must deal with every day, students break into small news meetings and plan the front page of a campus newspaper, which they sketch and then defend to their peers acting as opinionated news consumers.
Week 6: Feb. 27 - March 2	Test #1
L6: Opinion: The License to Kill What is the difference between news and opinion within the journalism neighborhood and why are the lines blurring so rapidly? How can you differentiate news from opinion in a newspaper, on television, on the Internet? What is a columnist? A commentator? Are bloggers journalists? How can a news consumer identify the difference? And why does it matter?	**R6: Test #1** Short-answer test covers all material from weeks 1-6, requires grasp of course material AND ability to cite specific news reports in answers to exam questions.
Week 7: March 5-9	
L7: Fairness and Bias This class explores one of the most controversial and contentious issues surrounding the press. Is the news media fair and balanced? What do those terms mean? How can a news consumer tell? What is bias? What's the difference between *media* bias and *audience* bias?	**R7: Media Bias vs. Own Bias** Students discuss the findings of their personal "Project Implicit" quiz and wrestle with the way that the same story looks very different from multiple viewpoints.
Week 8: March 12-16	
L8: Truth and Verification: What Is Journalistic Truth? How Do Journalists Verify Information? What do journalists mean by "truth"? How does journalistic truth differ from philosophical truth, or scientific truth? What standards do journalists use to try to verify information? This class explores the pursuit of journalistic "truth" and the verification process. What are the differences between direct and indirect evidence, assertion and verification, evidence and inference? How news consumers can assess journalistic evidence and why the verification	**R8: How Journalists Verify Information** Students review the issues of fairness and bias; discuss their responses to an Internet-based test of their own possible biases. Case study: Anderson Cooper's reporting about the tsunami in Sri Lanka. Students identify key factors in his verification process. Class also reviews the difference between assertion and verification and how separating the two can help news consumers weigh evidence. If time permits, students will engage in verification exercises.

process breaks down.	
Week 9: March 19-26	
L9: Evaluating Sources By looking at news coverage of Hurricane Katrina and how it relates to themes in the lecture, students learn to ask what makes some news sources reliable and others less reliable? What standards should news consumers use to weigh the credibility of sources quoted in news reports? Definitions of self-interest, independence and authority are explored.	**R9: Evaluating Sources:** Students begin to practice real-time source evaluation and explore questions such as: Does self-interest automatically degrade the credibility of a source? What obligation do reporters have to be transparent about their sources' self-interests, authority or background?
Week 10: March 26-30	
L10: Deconstructing the News This key class examines how to "deconstruct" news stories to judge their credibility and reliability by asking a series of key questions. The class reprises previous classes on evidence, sourcing, and fairness, but also explores context, transparency and thoroughness.	**R10: How to Deconstruct a Story** Students practice deconstructing several news stories together. Class also reviews assignment dealing with The Washington Post investigation of Walter Reed Army Hospital.
Week 11: April 2-6 SPRING BREAK	SPRING BREAK
Week 12: April 9-13	
L11: The Power of Images and Sound Photographs, recorded sound and moving pictures (film and video) are among journalists' most powerful tools of verification. Because of their visceral impact, they can arouse emotions, sometimes in useful ways, sometimes in manipulative ways. As modern culture becomes increasingly visual, what is the impact on the news consumer's search for reliable information? What special challenges arise when digital technologies can easily alter images and sound?	**R11**: Students discuss the power of images and sound to verify facts, but also to arouse news consumers' emotions.
Week 13: April 16-20	
L12: Deconstructing TV News Students apply the principles of deconstruction to TV news stories. Working with Associate Dean of Journalism Marcy McGinnis (Former Senior Vice President in charge of News at CBS) this lecture presents and analyzes a series of "winners" and "sinners" and how you can tell the difference.	**R12: What Do Ethics Have to Do with It, Anyway?** Self-censorship, when and why the news media withhold information, the First Amendment vs. the right to a fair trial or the right to privacy, the right to privacy vs. the right to know: How do these affect content and credibility? Students break into groups and examine a series of ethical case studies and

	"make the calls."
Week 14: April 23-27	
L13: Internet: We're All News Consumers and *Publishers* in the Digital Age This class looks at the new opportunities—and responsibilities—for news consumers to not only find news, but to participate as "citizen journalists" in news production in the digital age. Students will discuss the multiple means by which they can now influence and even contribute to news coverage via the Web, texting and social media	**R13: TEST #2** Short-answer test covers all material from weeks 7-14 (lectures 7-13), same format as Test #1: requires grasp of course material AND ability to cite specific news reports in answers to exam questions.
Week 15: April 30 - May 4	
. **L14: The Future of News** From Ben Franklin to Rupert Murdoch, American media outlets have always been driven by both profit and public service. How do the sweeping changes and economic problems in the news industry today affect the quality of journalism? Who will pay for watchdog journalism? Will new digital models and technologies make it more difficult—or easier-- to find reliable information?	**R14: Review for final** ***Final Essay Due***
Week 16	FINALS WEEK
FINAL EXAM: Wednesday, May 9, 8 a.m.-10:45 a.m.	Exam times and dates are subject to change by university schedulers. Watch Blackboard(tm) Page for exam place, date and time.