

Jour 3200
Final Essay

At the end of the semester, you will write a six-page (minimum) essay summarizing what you learned about the state of journalism in your research.

In this essay (six pages), I'd like to see evidence of your engagement with the text (demonstrating that you understand and can apply the principles as laid out in the chapter), combined with your research (your weekly assessment of the media through your blogs), to critique the current state of journalism in the United States. Some (but not all) of the questions you might address:

- Do we have a media we can trust to help our citizens stay informed about important political, cultural and social issues of our day?
- Do the media honor their obligation to truth?
- Do they demonstrate a loyalty to the citizens, or to political parties and social agendas?
- Is there evidence of responsible verification of stories, sources, facts and figures?
- Do they demonstrate independence from those parties and organizations they cover?
- Are they fulfilling their role of independently monitoring power?
- Is the media providing a forum for public criticism, or are they just giving us talking points from opposing sides?
- Are they striving to make the significant comprehensive and in proportion?
- Are you and your fellow citizens doing your job as members of the social system? Are you taking your responsibility seriously? Are you demanding your rights to receive news from a responsible press?

The point, of course, is NOT to answer these questions “yes” or “no,” but to use them as a starting point of discussion for demonstrating that you have been fully engaged with the , course: what is journalism, why is it important, what is its role in our democracy, and is it doing its job well.

You will need to follow MLA formatting rules. Here is basic starting point for developing the essay:

1. Write a well-defined thesis: A thesis statement contains a single idea, clearly focused and specifically stated, that grows out of your exploration of a subject. A thesis statement can be thought of as a central idea phrased in the form of an assertion. It is a claim—that is, it indicates what you claim to be true, interesting, or valuable about your subject.

2. Organize the classic rhetorical argument:

Introduction: Introduce your issue and capture the attention of your audience. Try using a short narrative or a strong example.

Background information: Provide your audience with a history of the situation—state how things currently stand. Define any key terms. Even if you think the facts speak for themselves, draw the attention of your audience to those points that are especially important and explain why they are meaningful.

Proposition: Introduce the position you are taking. Frame it as a thesis statement or claim.

Proof: Discuss the reasons why you have taken your position. Provide facts, expert testimony, and any other evidence that supports your claim.

Refutation: Show why you are not persuaded by the arguments of people who hold a different position. Concede any point that has merit but show why this concession does not damage your own case.

Conclusion: Summarize your most important points and appeal to your audience’s feelings.

3. Finally, follow all grammar, punctuation, and stylistic rules. The essay must be free of run-on sentences and sentence splices. Use active voice.

NOTE: You do not need to turn in a “Portfolio.” I will already have all of your news articles, and your blog. You can email me the Final Essay by midnight, December 5. Good luck, and have a safe and happy New Year.