

Assignment 2

Following the class discussions on media and popular culture, write an essay detailing the effect the media is having on some aspect of current society.

1. Prewriting
 - a. Prewriting Notes
 - b. Outline
2. Drafts
 - a. First Draft
 - b. Edited Draft
 - c. Revised Draft

Prewriting Notes

TV cable news as biased
not politically biased, but ratings biased
Distorted impressions of events
Examples Summer 2001 - shark attacks (until 9/11)
Summer 2002 - child abductions
Missing stories - AIDS in Africa, real Islam,
Russia's role
in the world after Cold War.
Changing demographics, more Hispanics than
blacks, more Muslims than Jews

OUTLINE

- 1 Typical view of TV bias
usual charges
- 2 Real bias, not political but ratings
- 3 Examples
- 4 Effects - panics, useless debates,
Obscuring real issues - AIDS, Islam, Russia,
demographics
- 5 CSPAN - college press build ratings.

Assignment 2

First Draft

Media Bias

Our class debate about media bias sparked a lively debate. Conservatives loved to list all the evidence of liberal bias in the media. Noting the lack of Republicans in the newsroom. They argued over and over again how big business leaders are always depicted as corrupt and how Christian conservatives are shown as narrow-minded bigots, ignoring the work their organization do to fight poverty and addiction. Liberals countered with their list of biases in the media, from Clinton-bashing to Rush Limbau and Patrick Buchanan. Several African-Americans argued that black conservatives on television. Totally ignoring the fact that there are probably as many black Marxists who never get air time. Muslim students argued that no moderate Muslims appear on television, leaving the public with the impression that all believers in Islam are anti-Semitic male chauvinists in league with the the taliban.

But the real bias, perhaps the more disturbing bias is not the barbed debate that takes place on cable talk shows that are only seen by a few hundred thousand viewers. The real bias in the news is about ratings.

Cable news promised to enlighten us, by opening up the usual thirty minutes of nightly news and occasional documenartary shows with the ability to

Assignment 2

delve deep into stories, provide background, and give indepth interviews.

But too often the coverage has been tabloid-driven. In the summer of 2001 there were a flood of stories about shark attacks. About half a dozen Americans were attacked by sharks. the attacked victums were good TV. Normal people out for a day at the beach laying blood covered amid shocked on-lookders and wailing family members.

Ater the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2000 these stories seemed pathetic. Experts pointed out that shark attacks were extremely rare and that the TV coverage devoted to a rare event obscured the real issues palgueing the planet - global warming, terrorism, the lack of health care, AIDS in Africa, the growing chasm between those linked by the Internet and half the world's population who have never made or received a phone call.

But during the summer of 2002 the lessons seemed lost. Even though FBI statistics reveal that child abductions are actually decreasing, a few highlighted cases dominated the news with hourly coverage. The airwaves were flooded with reports of kidnapped and missing children. Not that these are important issues that everyone can relate to. Media broadcasts giving out names, descriptions, and photographs have been helpful in alerting the public to aid in search and rescues. However, these reports distort the commonality of these events and get people upset about evetnts that are really somewhat uncommon. Instead of wooryign

Assignment 2

about childhood obesity which might lead to millions of children developing diabetes, premature heart disease and a host of life-threatening illness. A high speed car chase, a child taken from a gated community make for good TV. The real crises that plague the planet - AIDS in Africa, global warming, shifting demographics, all these get overlooked because they lack the drama of a tearful mother or a handcuffed suspect. The media could do a better job.

Edited Draft

Media Bias Better title

Our class debate about media bias sparked a lively debate. Conservatives loved to list **Repeat** all the evidence of liberal bias in the media. **Frag** Noting the lack of Republicans in the newsroom. They argued over and over again how **delete** big business leaders are always depicted as corrupt and how Christian conservatives are shown as narrow-minded bigots, ignoring the work their organizations **Do to** fight poverty and addiction. Liberals countered with their list of biases in the media, from Clinton-bashing to Rush Limbau and Patrick Buchanan. Several African-Americans argued that black **Frag** conservatives on television. Totally ignoring **Frag** the fact that there are probably as many black Marxists who never get air time. Muslim students argued that no moderate Muslims appear on television, leaving the public with the impression that all believers in Islam are anti-Semetic male **SP?** chavinists in leage with the the taliban. **Cap?**

But the real bias, perhaps the more disturbing bias, is not the barbed debate that takes place on cable talk shows that are only seen by a few hundred thousand viewers. The real bias in the news is about ratings.

Cable news promised to enlighten us, by opening

Assignment 2

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But too often the coverage has been tabloid-driven. In the summer of 2001 there were a flood **was** of stories about shark attacks. About half a dozen Americans were attacked by sharks. the attacked **SP** victums were good TV. Normal people out for a day at the beach laying blood covered amid shocked on-lookders and wailing family members. **FRAG**

Ater the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2000, these stories seemed pathetic. Experts pointed out that shark attacks were extremely rare and that the TV coverage devoted to a rare event obscured the real issues palgueing the planet - global warming, terrorism, the lack of health care, AIDS in Africa, the growing chasm between those linked by the Internet and half the world's population who have never made or received a phone call.

But during the summer of 2002 the lessons seemed lost. Even though FBI statistics reveal that child abductions are actually decreasing, a few highlighted cases dominated the news with hourly coverage. The airwaves were flooded with reports of kidnapped and missing children. Not that these are important issues that everyone can relate to. Media broadcasts giving out names, descriptions, and photographs have been helpful in alerting the public to aid in search and rescues.

Assignment 2

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Revision Notes

- 1 Stronger Thesis**
- 2 Better Focus**
- 3 Stronger call for action at end - more ideas outlining possible solutions. Mention C-SPAN**
- 4 Edit for spelling, word repetitions, fragments, etc.**

Assignment 2

Revised Draft

The Real Media Bias

Our class discussion about media bias sparked a lively debate. Conservatives listed evidence of liberal bias in the media, repeatedly noting the lack of Republicans in the newsroom. They argued that television news depicts business leaders as greedy and corrupt bosses rather than skilled entrepreneurs who develop new technologies and create millions of jobs. Christian conservatives, they argued, are shown as narrow-minded bigots, ignoring the charitable work their churches do to fight poverty and addiction. Liberals countered with their own list of biases in the media, from Clinton-bashing to Rush Limbaugh and Patrick Buchanan. Several African-Americans insisted that a handful of black conservatives are given undue prominence. The public, they insist, is given the impression that many blacks are conservative, totally ignoring the larger number of African-American Marxists who never get air time. Muslim students pointed out that few moderate Muslims appear on television, leaving viewers with the impression that all believers in Islam are anti-Semitic male chauvinists in league with the Taliban.

But the real bias, perhaps the more disturbing bias, is not reflected in the barbed debate that takes place on cable talk shows that are only seen by a few hundred thousand viewers. The real bias in the news is about ratings.

Cable news promised to enlighten us, by opening

Assignment 2

up the usual thirty minutes of nightly news and occasional documentary with the ability to delve deep into stories, provide background, and give in-depth interviews.

But too often the coverage has been tabloid-driven. In the summer of 2001 there was a flood of stories about shark attacks. About half a dozen Americans were bitten by sharks. The victims made good TV. Normal people out for a day at the ocean could be shown lying on the beach covered in blood, surrounded by shocked on-lookers and wailing family members. Channel surfers were bound to put the remote down and boost ratings to see real "reality television."

After the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, these stories seemed superficial. Commentators insisted that shark attacks are extremely rare and that the TV coverage devoted to a rare event obscured the real problems plaguing the planet - global warming, terrorism, the lack of health care, AIDS in Africa, the growing chasm between those linked by the Internet and the billions of people who have never made or received a phone call.

But during the summer of 2002 the lessons seemed lost. Even though FBI statistics reveal that child abductions are actually decreasing, a few highlighted cases dominated the news with hourly coverage. The airwaves were bombarded with reports of kidnapped and missing children. True, these are moving stories and the media has played an important role in search and rescue operations by

Assignment 2

broadcasting names and license plate numbers. But does a kidnapping in Southern California deserve national coverage?

The problem is that news has become entertainment. Competition for ratings and advertising dollars has led news directors to focus on events that grab attention, not stories of genuine significance. Instead of meaningful coverage of issues that will affect all of our lives - climate change, tax policy, welfare reform, or foreign policy - we are treated to infotainment - car chases, shootouts, and celebrity scandals.

We may not be able to change the networks, but consumers can promote and support channels like CSPAN, which often devotes two hours to a forum of academics, statesmen, and political activists. Local cable access channels can be given more resources to broadcast meaningful programming. Given the reduced cost of video cameras and computers, it may be up to viewers to begin a grassroots movement to shape television in the twenty-first century.

Assignment 2