

Preparation for the November 13, 2024 Topical Seminar at the Lewes Library at 3 PM

Topic: Journalism

This month, we'll explore journalism and its role in democracy. For a democracy to thrive, citizens need reliable information on issues that affect their lives. Journalism is the primary means of distributing this information, but is it healthy today? Public trust is at a low point. Can journalists be objective, and if not, which news sources should we trust? Has journalism become a tool in partisan culture wars? These are some of the questions we'll discuss.

Please review the materials below and submit a written response of at least 200 words. You are welcome to approach the topic in any way you choose. Email your response to lewesseminar@gmail.com by Monday, November 11. Please read your fellow participants' responses before our meeting on Wednesday, November 13.

In instances where the sources are lengthy, I've provided ChatGPT generated summaries. You'll find these on the website.

Main Resource

We will begin with the **Munk Debate on Journalism**, featuring Douglas Murray, Matt Taibbi, Malcolm Gladwell, and Michelle Goldberg. The debate topic: **“Be it resolved: Don't trust the mainstream media.”**

< <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nvaf7XOOFHc> >

Tip: The actual debate begins around the 10-minute mark.

(Summary available: Key Points, Munk Debate)

Additional Resources

1. **More Americans – especially young adults – are regularly getting news on TikTok** by Rebecca Leppert & Katerina Eva Matsa

< <https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2024/09/17/more-americans-regularly-get-news-on-tiktok-especially-young-adults/> >

2. **Audiences are declining for traditional news media in the U.S. – with some exceptions** by Michael Lipka & Elisa Shearer

< <https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2023/11/28/audiences-are-declining-for-traditional-news-media-in-the-us-with-some-exceptions/> >

3. Beyond Objectivity: Producing trustworthy news in today's newsrooms by Leonard Downie Jr. & Andrew Heyward

< <https://cronkitenewslab.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/Beyond-Objectivity-Report-3.pdf>>

(Summary available: Beyond Objectivity.)

4. Objectivity in Journalism: A Fair but Flawed Idea? by Scott A. Leadingham

< <https://www.freedomforum.org/objectivity-in-journalism/>>

5. Don't repeat the myth: A local reporter's toolkit for covering mis- and disinformation on social media by Howard Hardee

< https://ethics.journalism.wisc.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/2130/2024/06/EIP_ResponsibleReporting.pdf#:~:text=Don%E2%80%99t%20repeat%20the%20myth:%20A%20local%20reporter%E2%80%99s%20toolkit%20for%20covering>

(Summary available: Disinformation Toolkit.)

6. A guide to covering hate speech without amplifying it by Abigail Steinberg

< <https://ethics.journalism.wisc.edu/2020/06/29/a-guide-to-covering-hate-speech-without-amplifying-it/>>

Writing Prompts

1. How have digital media platforms like TikTok and X (formerly, Twitter) reshaped traditional journalism, and what are the long-term implications for news accuracy and depth of reporting?
2. Is objectivity in journalism possible, or even desirable? How should journalists navigate the tension between objectivity and advocacy, especially when covering politically charged topics?
3. In an era of "fake news" and disinformation, what ethical responsibilities do journalists have to ensure their reporting counters false narratives, and how can they do so without becoming partisan themselves?
4. With the rise of opinion-based reporting, what is the appropriate role of personal perspectives in journalism? Should journalists make their biases clear, or strive for impartiality even when covering controversial issues?

5. Local journalism is often seen as vital for community engagement, yet it's in decline. What are the consequences of the erosion of local journalism for democracy, and how can it be revitalized in the age of digital media?
6. Public trust in journalism is at an all-time low. What steps can journalists and news organizations take to rebuild trust, and is it even possible in today's polarized media landscape?

Sources

Youtube Video

Murray, D., Taibbi, M., Gladwell, M., & Goldberg, M. (2024). *The Munk Debate: Be it resolved don't trust the mainstream media*.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nvaf7XOOFHc>.

Trends

Leppert, R., & Matsa, K. E. (2024, September 17). *More Americans – especially young adults – are regularly getting news on TikTok*. Pew Research Center.

<https://www.pewresearch.org>.

Lipka, M., & Shearer, E. (2023, November 28). *Audiences are declining for traditional news media in the U.S. – with some exceptions*. Pew Research Center.

<https://www.pewresearch.org>.

Objectivity

Downie Jr., L., & Heyward, A. *Beyond Objectivity: Producing trustworthy news in today's newsrooms*. Walter Cronkite School of Journalism and Mass Communication, Arizona State University. <https://www.cronkite.asu.edu>.

Leadingham, S. A. *Objectivity in Journalism: A Fair but Flawed Idea?*. Freedom Forum.

<https://www.freedomforum.org>.

Disinformation

Hardee, H. *Don't repeat the myth: A local reporter's toolkit for covering mis- and disinformation on social media*. Election Integrity Project: Responsible Reporting Toolkit.

<https://www.electoralintegrityproject.com/>

Steinberg, A. (2020, June 29). *A Guide to covering hate speech without amplifying it*. Center for Journalism Ethics. <https://ethics.journalism.wisc.edu/>.

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October 6, 2024