



Learn More About...

Media Reform

An Annotated Bibliography

Click [HERE](#) for more resources on the various interrelated issues affecting the media.

Web Links

Free Press <<http://www.freepress.net>>

Free Press is a non-profit organization working to involve the public in media policymaking and to craft policies for a more democratic media system. The organization puts on the annual national conference for Media Reform. The web site has an extensive library of articles on a wide spectrum of topics related to or influenced by the media.

AlterNet <<http://www.alternet.org>>

AlterNet is a project of the Independent Media Institute, a nonprofit organization dedicated to strengthening and supporting independent and alternative journalism.

Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting <<http://www.fair.org/index.php>>

Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting (FAIR) advocates for greater diversity in the press and scrutinizes media practices that marginalize public interest, minority and dissenting viewpoints. FAIR believes that structural reform is ultimately needed to break up the dominant media conglomerates, establish independent public broadcasting and promote strong non-profit sources of information.

Fact Check <<http://www.factcheck.org/>>

The Annenberg Political Fact Check is a project of the Annenberg Public Policy Center of the University of Pennsylvania. It is a nonpartisan, nonprofit, "consumer advocate" that aims to reduce the level of deception and confusion in U.S. politics. The site monitors the factual accuracy of what is said by major U.S. political players in the form of TV ads, debates, speeches, interviews, and news releases. Their stated goal is to apply the best practices of both journalism and scholarship, and to increase public knowledge and understanding.

Catholic Media Report <<http://www.catholicmediawatch.org/index.php>>

Catholic Media Report is a project of the [Catholic Democracy Institute](#), a non-partisan not-for-profit organization. *Catholic Media Report* is one of the ways in which the Catholic Democracy Institute educates Catholic Americans about the fullness of the Catholic faith as it relates to life in their democratic society.

Books

Edward S. Herman and Noam Chomsky, *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media* (New York: Pantheon, 2002).

This book analyzes the ways the media are influenced to shape major social agendas. The authors show that free-market media lead inevitably to narrow reporting. First published in 1988, a new introduction was added in 2002.

Robert McChesney, *The Problem of the Media: U.S. Communication Politics in the 21st Century* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 2004).

This book explores the political economy of the media, illuminating its major flashpoints and controversies by locating them in the political economy of U.S. capitalism. It deals with issues such as the declining quality of journalism, the question of bias, the weakness of the public broadcasting sector and the limits and possibilities of antitrust legislation in regulating the media. It points out the ways in which the existing media system has become a threat to democracy, and shows how it could be made to serve the interests of the majority.

Noam Chomsky, *Media Control: The Spectacular Achievements of Propaganda* (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2002). Chomsky looks at American propaganda efforts, from the warmongering of Woodrow Wilson to the creation of popular support for the 1991 military intervention in Kuwait, and reveals how falsification of history, suppression of information and the promotion of vapid, empty concepts have become standard operating procedure for the leaders of the United States – both Democrats and Republicans – in their efforts to prevent citizens from raising awkward questions about policy.

George Lakoff, *Don't Think of an Elephant: Know Your Values and Frame the Debate* (White River Jct., VT: Chelsea Green Publishing, 2004).

George Lakoff argues that much of the success the Republican Party can be attributed to a persistent ability to control the language of key issues and thus position themselves in favorable terms to voters. While Democrats may have valid arguments, Lakoff points out they are destined to lose when they and the news media accept such nomenclature as "pro-life," "tax relief," and "family values," since to argue against such inherently positive terminology necessarily casts the arguer in a negative light. Lakoff offers recommendations for ways the progressive movement can regain semantic equity by reframing their arguments.

Articles/Papers

Diane Farsetta and Daniel Price, "Fake TV News: Widespread and Undisclosed," *Center for Media and Democracy*, 6 April 2006 <<http://www.prwatch.org/fakenews/execsummary>>

This multi-media report is the culmination of an intensive, ten month investigation by CMD. It provides the most extensive account to date of how corporate-funded video news releases are routinely aired, without disclosure, as though they were independent news reports.

James Rainey, "More News Outlets, Fewer Stories: New Media Paradox," *Truthout*, 13 March 2006 <http://www.truthout.org/docs_2006/031306H.shtml>

A "new paradox of journalism" has emerged in which the number of news outlets continues to grow, yet the number of stories covered and the depth of many reports is decreasing, according to an annual review of the news business.

"The Failures of Post 9/11 Media," *AlterNet*, 2 January 2006 <<http://www.alternet.org/mediaculture/29833/>>

A new book edited by Kristina Borjesson asks America's top journalists for insights on why post-9/11, pre-Iraq War news coverage was so shoddy. AlterNet interviewed Borjesson about the power and prejudice behind the "free press."

"Who Owns the Media?" *Free Press*, <<http://www.freepress.net/resources/ownership>>

Big media are getting bigger. This interactive chart, primarily based on information from Columbia Journalism Review's Who Owns What? site, shows who owns what.

"Tips for Writing Letters to the Editor," *Community Media Workshop*, <http://www.newstips.org/print.php?section=Successful+Schools+Sub&main_id=205>

Letters to the editors of local and statewide newspapers are a good way to express your views on an issue while also providing important information to the public. Your letter can help them gain new insights and encourage them to take some action. This article gives tips to increase the chances of your letter getting into print.

Periodicals/Newsletters

AlterNet <<http://www.alternet.org/>>

Democracy Now <<http://www.democracynow.org/>>

Media Channel <<http://mediachannel.org/>>

Common Dreams <<http://www.commondreams.org/email.htm>>

Community Media Workshop <<http://communitymediaworkshop.org/>>

Center for Public Integrity, public e-newsletter <<http://www.publicintegrity.org/about/publici.aspx>>

National Catholic Reporter breaking news and updates <<http://ncronline.org/>>

Audio/Visual/Interactive Resources

Frances Moore Lappe, "The Media Challenge – Generating a Positive Effect," 30-minute plenary presentation at the 1999 Bioneers Conference.

The author of *Diet for a Small Planet* believes that telling our stories must not take second place to doing our work.

Good Night and Good Luck. Prod. Warner Independent Pictures, 2005

In 1953, colleagues of CBS news personality Edward R. Murrow pressured him to submit to Senator Joseph McCarthy's obsession with cleansing America of all potential subversives. Using the forum of Murrow's popular program, "See It Now," the broadcast journalist and his producer, Fred Friendly, investigated McCarthy's tactics, angering their boss, sponsors, and the government.

Independent Media in a Time of War. Prod. Democracy Now, 2003

<<http://www.mediaed.org/cgi-bin/commerce.cgi?preadd=action&key=110>>

In this lecture, Amy Goodman, independent journalist and host of the popular radio show *Democracy Now!* speaks about the corporate media's coverage of the 2003 Iraq War. She discusses the way that the U.S. media downplayed civilian casualties and glorified military combat, and she asks her audience to consider the costs of coverage that is both sanitized and sensationalized. At the core of her lecture is a deep commitment to the ethics of journalism. Goodman uses the concrete example of the Iraq war to ask her audience to grapple with a larger question: What impact does the commercialization and consolidation of the media industry have on journalism and democracy?

The Insider. Prod. Blue Lion Entertainment, 1999

This film recounts the chain of events that pitted an ordinary man against the tobacco industry. When former tobacco executive Dr. Jeffrey Wigand is fired by his employer -- one of the largest tobacco companies in America -- he agrees to become a paid consultant for a story *60 Minutes* producer Lowell Bergman is working on regarding alleged unethical practices within the tobacco industry. As they soon find out, Corporate America will use all legal means at its disposal to save a billion-dollar-a-year habit.

Fear and Favor in the Newsroom. Prod. Northwest Passage Productions, 1997

This documentary, narrated by Studs Terkel, shows that ownership of the press by a small elite constricts the free flow of ideas and information upon which our democracy depends. The filmmakers explore the extent that corporate influence exerts over the mass media.

Wag the Dog. Prod. Baltimore Pictures, 1997

This political satire features a spin-doctor and a Hollywood producer who join efforts to "fabricate" a war in order to cover-up a presidential sex scandal. After being caught in a scandalous situation days before the election, the president does not seem to have much of a chance of being re-elected. One of his advisors contacts a top Hollywood producer in order to manufacture a war in Albania that the president can heroically end, all through mass media.

Broadcast News. Prod. 20th Century Fox, 1987

Holly Hunter plays a network news producer who, much to her chagrin, finds herself falling for glamorous anchorman William Hurt, who represents a hated shift from hard news toward packaged "infotainment," which Hunter despises. Completing the triangle is Albert Brooks, who provides contrast as the gifted reporter with

almost no presence on camera. The film shows remarkable insight into the people who make television. Below the surface love triangle, this behind-the-scenes comedy is a revealing look into the world of television. The film was nominated for seven Academy Awards.

All the President's Men. Prod. Warner Bros., 1976

In the run-up to the 1972 elections, Washington Post reporter Bob Woodward covers what seems to be a minor break-in at the Democratic Party National headquarters. He is surprised to find top lawyers already on the defense case, and the discovery of names and addresses of Republican fund organizers further arouses his suspicions. Reporters Woodward and Carl Bernstein uncover the details of the Watergate scandal that lead to President Nixon's resignation.

Network. Prod. MGM, 1976

Media madness reigns supreme in screenwriter Paddy Chayefsky's scathing satire about the uses and abuses of network television. Chayefsky's and director Sidney Lumet's take on television may seem quaint 30 years later. Chayefsky's Oscar-winning script about the ratings frenzy at the cost of cultural integrity is a showcase for powerhouse acting by Peter Finch, Faye Dunaway and Beatrice Straight (who each won Oscars), and Oscar nominee William Holden in one of his finest roles.

Fahrenheit 451. Anglo Enterprises, 1966

Based on the 1951 Ray Bradbury novel. Guy Montag is a firefighter who lives in a lonely, isolated society where books have been outlawed by a government fearing an independent-thinking public. People in this society are drugged into compliance and get their information from wall-length television screens. Montag begins to question the government's motives behind book-burning.