Journalism: Unit 1

Details about Unit 1 Assignments are in the second half of this presentation.
Six elements are “news values”

- Timeliness
- Proximity
- Prominence
- Conflict
- Impact
- Novelty/Human Interest
An article is timely because the news is happening RIGHT NOW or it JUST HAPPENED.

Sometimes the timeliness refers to the event itself (the crash of the economy).

Sometimes the timeliness refers to the most recent update on an event (the latest proposal for the economy).

Timeliness ONLY REFERS TO HOW RECENTLY SOMETHING HAPPENED – it’s about the “right now!”
Proximity

- Proximity refers to the PHYSICAL LOCATION of news and how geographically close a story is to you.
- Proximity usually refers to physical closeness, but it can sometimes refer to emotional closeness.
- Something in your city has very close proximity.
- Something happening in China does not have proximity to someone in the U.S. unless they have relatives there or they care deeply about the story for other reasons.
- The closer a story is, the more important it seems.
Prominence

- Refers to famous people or people who have a big impact
- Politicians, celebrities, sports figures, reality TV stars, government officials
- Prominence can relate to proximity... the mayor of Dallas has a great deal of prominence in Dallas, some prominence (but not as much) in Texas, less prominence in the U.S. and no prominence to people in India
- A completely ordinary story can become big news simply because of prominence
  - Weddings
  - Babies
  - Deaths
  - Arrests
Conflict

- If two or more people, groups, countries or other forces are in disagreement, there’s conflict
- Sports games
- Wars
- Protests
- Court cases
- Violence and crime
- Public disagreements
Impact

- How much something will affect the life of its readers is its impact.

- Sometimes called “consequence”.

- Usually refers to the way something could change your life, or make your life easier, harder, etc.

- The bigger a story’s impact, the more important it is.

- One of the most powerful news values.
Novelty/Human Interest

- Any story that taps into the reader’s emotions or curiosity has human interest.
- The story might make the reader laugh, cry, decide to take action, or simply see the world differently.
- These are the most fun to find and can be the most difficult to write (but the most rewarding too!)
The following slides will show you how to complete the Reporter’s Reflections journals.
ALL REPORTER’S REFLECTIONS JOURNALS ARE TURNED INTO THE DROPBOX

- The Journal has been disabled for this course so that you may turn in all assignments through the dropbox.

- Assignment 1.03 should be submitted to the Dropbox for Reporter’s Reflection 1. You’ll submit 1.04 to Reporter’s Reflection 2, etc.

- You may type your answer directly into the text portion of the dropbox submission area OR you may attach a Microsoft Word document or a PDF.

- Please do not use any formats besides .doc, .docx and .pdf
Example for Reporter’s Reflection 1

1.03 News Values Then

I found an article from the New York Times about President John F Kennedy which can be found at this link: http://www.nytimes.com/learning/general/onthisday/big/1122.html#article

This story contains several news values that make it news.

The first news value is prominence. This story contains prominence because the President of the United States is a prominent person, so anything that happens to him would be news.

The second news value is impact. The death of the President will have an impact on the rest of the U.S. in changing how the country is led. People may also feel emotionally upset about the President’s death.

The third news value is conflict. If the President was shot, there was obviously someone who had a conflict with him, so the conflict with the President would be news.
1.04 News Values Now

- This journal will look the same as 1.03 New Values Then

- For example, President Obama issued a statement recently regarding the Keystone pipeline. Think about a news story that might discuss this recent event.

- What news values might appear in this kind of story? Why?

- Which ones probably would not appear? Why?

- This journal will look the same as 1.03 New Values Then
Look at the two articles you used for the first two Reporter’s Reflections.

Compare the stories and think about how reporting the news has changed over the years. Post your response (min. 60-75 words) to 1.05 Discussion.

- Has the language used in news stories changed over time?
- Does the very definition of news or news values seem different?
- Does what passes as fact in the news story seem different?
- Is the presentation different, such as quality of photographs and enhanced multimedia?
- What is each of the story's sources (attribution) and is there anything to note about similarities or differences?

Respond to THREE CLASSMATES with at least 40 words each to get full credit.

- First post (60-75 words minimum): up to 10 points
- Second post (min. 40 words): up to 13 points
- Third post (min. 40 words): up to 18 points
- Fourth post (min. 40 words): up to 20 points
1.08 Compare Mediums

Find TWO stories about the SAME TOPIC/ISSUE/EVENT in two different mediums AND two different sources.

You should pick TWO of these three mediums:

- Online/print (this counts as ONE medium) [WRITTEN]
- Television/video/YouTube/online video [VIDEO]
- Radio/Podcast/online audio [AUDIO]

For example, the two stories below are both about President Obama’s job plan in September, but one is WRITTEN and in the New York Times while the other is AUDIO and from National Public Radio.

NYTimes:  

NPR:  
http://www.npr.org/player/v2/mediaPlayer.html?action=1&t=1&islist=false&id=140321260&m=140321252
Consider BOTH versions of the story. What’s the best way to tell this particular story...?

NPR story...
- What news values were MOST emphasized?
- Were there any news values emphasized in the NYTimes story that didn’t appear here as much?
- What WORKS in telling this story on the radio?
- What are we missing that we can get in another medium?

NYTimes story...
- What news values were MOST emphasized?
- Were there any that the NPR story emphasized that the NYTimes story did not?
- What WORKS in telling this story in a news article?
- What are we missing that we can get in another medium?
For the sample entry below, pretend like X, Y, Z, A and B represent different news values. For the links, include the full link. Entry should be one to two paragraphs – about 125-200 words

I read and listened to two stories about President Obama’s speech to Congress about the jobs bill he wants passed. The first was in the New York Times here: (link here) and the other was an audio story from NPR (link here). In the written NYT story the news values emphasized were X and Y and Z, but the NPR version focused more on news values X and A and B. The NYT story completely ignored the B aspect. I liked the radio version because you could hear the exact words Obama used in his tone of voice showing... However, in the NYT article, the reporter could go into much more detail about Obama’s plan and... Overall, I preferred the (choose one – radio/news/video) version because...
For this assignment, you must watch a new story. You can watch one on TV, on YouTube or on a news station’s website.

The “visuals” of the story include EVERYTHING you see: video, photos, maps, “talking heads,” news anchors, text, graphics, cartoons...

You will write down ALL the things you see while you watch the story.

Now... pretend you are a radio journalist. How would you tell this story? What would be different? What would you add?

Are there any facts that would get emphasized or minimized in the radio version vs. the TV version?

This entry should be 100 to 200 words.
Excellent Example of a Student’s “Visuals” Reporter’s Reflection

I watched a short clip on TXA 21 news. Here are the visuals:

- The news story begins with one of the main reporters at the news station reporting that a worker on a cell phone tower who was barely conscious from heat exhaustion was stranded 700 feet in the air.
- The scene cuts to a truck with lights flashing.
- Then the scene cuts to the tower in which the worker was stranded.
- After that, the camera goes back to a reporter at the scene who is giving information about the worker that was suffering from heat stress.
- The camera shows the tower again.
- Then the scene cuts to an interview with a Firefighter.
- The camera shows the tower again.
- The camera then goes back to an interview with the Chief Firefighter.
- The camera cuts to the tower again.
- Again, the camera goes back to an interview with a Lieutenant Firefighter.
- The camera then shows a truck along with the tower.
- Once again, the camera interviews another Firefighter.
- The camera then shows the tower with people climbing down on a rope.
- The camera shows earlier interviewed Firefighters talking some more.
- Then the camera shows the reporter at the scene again, giving some more information.
- Finally, the camera shows the reporter at the main station.

Continued on next slide
How I imagine I would tell the same story for the radio without the same visual material:

Last night a worker on a cell phone tower, barely conscious from heat exhaustion, was stranded 700 feet in the air. The worker, suffering from heat stress, had a hard time getting down. Firefighters were called to the rescue. We are with Chief Firefighter Mr. X and Lieutenant Firefighter Mr. Y, who were at the scene: (chief Firefighter and lieutenant on the phone). Mr. X, what was your reaction when you first heard the situation? (Chief Firefighter talks)

etc... Then the radio reporter continues asking questions to both of them and it's a lengthy conversation.

Producing a piece for the ear as opposed to the eye may change a few news values. For example, timeliness may be more emphasized with the radio because all it requires is someone to step up to the microphone and start speaking. However, with a camera you need visuals, which may take a little longer to prepare for the public, regardless of whether it is live or not. Furthermore, impact may be emphasized more in visual news as opposed to the ear because the people can see what is going on and as a result, people are more aware.
Extra Credit: Option 1

- Watch the film “All the President’s Men.” Then answer THREE of the following questions:
  - Woodward and Bernstein served as watchdogs of our government officials. What are some of the challenges they confronted as reporters unraveling the Watergate story?
  - What personality traits made them good watchdogs of the government?
  - Describe Woodward and Bernstein’s reporting process. What did they do to make absolutely sure they had as much factual information as possible?
  - How did The Washington Post’s publisher and editors support Woodward and Bernstein?
  - Why do you think Woodward and Bernstein refused to give up on their story?
  - What lessons does The Washington Post’s coverage of Watergate provide to journalists and the news media today?
Extra Credit: Option 2

- Watch the following documentary about the Watergate scandal, available on Netflix:

- After viewing the documentary, answer the following three questions in at least two sentences each.
  - Why did Woodward keep Deep Throat's identity a secret for so many years, even long after Nixon had resigned?
  - Why did Robert Redford feel this story was so important to tell in a narrative film that he worked hard to convince the reporters to allow their story to be told?
  - In what ways did the reporting on Watergate influence future American journalists and American journalism after Nixon's resignation?