

- I. Introduction: the news media in American history
- A. Print media
1. Newspapers
 - a. Party papers: (late-1700s thru 1820s) highly partisan editorial commentary – aimed at partisan elites
 - b. Penny papers: (1830s) tabloid news & features (sports, comics, classified ads, etc.) – aimed at the newly literate and enfranchised masses
 - (1) Anti-intellectualism
 - (2) Sensationalism
 - (a) Foreign affairs
 - i) Xenophobia
 - ii) Manifest destiny
 - iii) Jingoism
 - (b) Domestic affairs
 - i) Fear
 - ii) Prejudice
 - c. Major metropolitan papers: (1840-50s) more neutral, hard-news reporting aimed at educated elites and emerging middle class
 - d. Newspaper chains
 - e. National edition papers
 2. Magazines
 - a. News summary
 - b. Editorial commentary
 - c. Feature
- B. Electronic media
1. Wire services
 2. Radio
 - a. News
 - b. Talk
 3. Television
 - a. Commercial -- infotainment
 - (1) Style > substance
 - (2) Visual images > substantive analysis
 - (3) Surface > detail
 - (4) Symptoms > causes
 - (5) Problems > solutions
 - (6) Conflict > compromise
 - (7) Failures > successes
 - (8) Personal character > professional competence
 - b. Non-commercial ("public")
 4. Computer networks
 - a. Internet
 - b. Intranet
- C. Relative impact of print & electronic media
1. Mass public
 2. Attentive public and opinion leaders
- D. Other forms of human expression with politically relevant messages
1. Fiction and nonfiction *books*
 2. Stage and screen *plays*
 3. Classical and popular *music*
 4. Amateur and professional *sports*
 5. Mainstream and evangelical *religion*

II. Traditional coverage: hard news

- A. The horse race v. substantive coverage Figure 7-1, p. 229

- B. The bad news syndrome (bias in news-media coverage of general elections) Figure 7-2, p. 231
 - 1. *Incumbents* (regardless of party) usually receive more negative news-media coverage than *challengers*.
 - 2. And *both* receive more negative than positive coverage by a 2-to-1 ratio.
 - C. Other news-media biases:
 - 1. Print and broadcast media's competition for a *scoop*: "new news"
 - a. A fresh face winning over an experienced candidate is news; the reverse is not.
 - b. The 1st time a candidate states a position is news, the 2nd time is old news, the 3rd time is not news.
 - c. Verbal slips, inconsistent statements, and mistakes then become the focus of news coverage.
 - 2. Television's emphasis on *brevity*: bumper-sticker sound bites versus lengthy statements
 - 3. Television's emphasis on *visual elements*: pictures versus analysis
 - D. The story line: *framing effects* biases
 - 1. The *bandwagon v. likely-loser* story lines
 - 2. The *dark-horse v. front-runner* story lines
 - 3. The *incumbent v. challenger* story lines
 - 4. The *third-party candidate as spoiler* story line
 - E. Impact of the news media (on voters and opinion leaders)
 - 1. Relative influence: broadcast v. print
 - 2. Selective attention, perception, and retention of voters
 - 3. Adversarial v. symbiotic relationship with candidates
- III. Nontraditional coverage: soft news
- A. Types
 - 1. Talk shows
 - 2. Entertainment shows
 - 3. Town meetings
 - B. Advantages over "hard" news coverage
 - 1. A less adversarial, more sympathetic or deferential host
 - 2. A less political/partisan audience
 - 3. Can speak longer
 - 4. Don't have to pay
 - 5. Can generate other media coverage
- IV. Presidential debates Table 7-1, p. 239
- A. Preparation
 - B. Strategy and tactics: The televised presidential-campaign debates have been typically desired most by the 'weaker' candidate trailing in the polls and feared most by the 'stronger' candidate who is the frontrunner
 - C. Evaluation and impact:
 - 1. For committed voters: a greater tendency to confirm rather than to change pre-debate voter perceptions Table 7-2, p. 244
 - 2. For undecided voters: can make a difference in close races (1960, '76, & 2000)
- V. Campaign advertising
- A. Media consultants
 - B. Techniques and timing
 - 1. Personal appeals
 - 2. Policy appeals
 - 3. Negative attacks on opponent (as old as the Republic)
 - C. Targeting:
 - 1. Battleground states (competitive, large-electoral-vote states)
 - 2. Key socio-demographic groups: (defined by gender, race, religion, hot-button issue positions)
 - D. Images and messages Box 7-1, pp. 253-56
 - 1. Positive: own candidate's strength
 - 2. Negative: opposition candidate's vulnerabilities (wedge issues and personal shortcomings)
 - a. Legitimate comparisons that appeal to reason and logic
 - b. Scurrilous distortions that appeal to fears and base emotions
- VI. The cumulative impact of media: the news media provide less information to typical voters than paid political advertisements (because of the typical-voter's over-reliance on television instead of the print news)
- VII. Summary