**Final Project: News Literacy Unit**

**60 points**

Your final project mimics the three basic actions of an engaged, literate news consumer: assess, evaluate, and respond. So, you will be doing three things for your final project.

1. **Assess** your own dispositions, biases and expectations.

2. **Evaluate** news coverage of an event or topic.

3. **Respond** to the news media in some way to engage discussion about your findings.

**Part 1: ASSESS** (20 points)

To assess your own disposition as a news media consumer, you must create a visual representation of your news media consumption (either a table or a chart). This chart must track your news consumption for 48 hours and must provide the following information (see example). Please be sure to log every time you use a certain media, and not just the total time spent with that media. For example, you’ll see that social media use is listed multiple times below.

Media Type Name of Media Time

Social media Facebook 8 a.m.-8:15 a.m.

News KKCO TV station 5:30-6 p.m.

Entertainment Jon Stewart 11-11:30 p.m.

Social media Facebook 11:30 p.m.-12 a.m.

You must then use your chart to answer the following questions in complete, well-reasoned, clear sentences:

1. What trends do you notice about the kind of news media you consume on a regular basis?
2. Do you consume more entertainment media or more news media? What do you think your habits demonstrate about how engaged you are with news media?
3. Explain why you read/watch certain news sources over others.
4. How could you increase the variety and diversity of news you consume? What would it take for you to actually do this?
5. Describe your overall thoughts about the news media you consume and how they do their job--do they cover things of interest to you? Do you think they are mostly accurate? Do you find them to be reliable? Explain your responses.

**Part 2: EVALUATE** (20 points)

Select a local or national news source that you are familiar with, and pick a story that has been in the news recently. Using the bias exercise from week three (lesson 3.3), evaluate the bias and credibility of the TWO main sources found in the story. This will require you to do a considerable amount of research into the story and the sources. Complete the following worksheet as you research:

Step 1: Identify the two main sources from your story, and use the Internet to research those sources as you attempt to address each of the seven source evaluation tips from Poynter. The tips listed below are for your reference and to guide you as you create your response in part 3. *You do not have to answer each question individually.* Your job is to gather information about the sources based on these questions, and then tell me whether you think those sources were credible enough to be in the story.

1. Always ask: how does the source know what he/she knows?
2. Consider how you could prove what the source knows through records or other sources.
3. Ask what assumptions the source is making, and question those assumptions.
4. Ask yourself who else might know this information.
5. Ask whether this source has proven reliable in the past or is referenced by other media.
6. Does the source have any motive for providing this information? How does this information make the source look?
7. Could the average citizen contact this source to find out more?

Step 2: As you research your sources, you are also evaluating the credibility of the websites that are providing your information. List three websites you used to evaluate your sources, and explain in 1-2 sentences how you know these sources are reputable and reliable.

1. Website:

2. Website:

3. Website:

Step 3: Finally, answer the following question in a well-reasoned paragraph

*Based on your findings, were these sources credible? Explain your answer.*

**Part 3: RESPOND** (20 points)

Here’s the part where you get to be really creative. Find a topic that is getting covered in the news right now, something that you are interested in and that you think is relevant to your life (this could be anything--arts, politics, sports, entertainment, but it should be covered by mainstream media). Brainstorm a way to respond to the news media in regards to the story and how it’s being covered. The sky's the limit.

*You could write a letter to the editor, as we did earlier in the unit.*

*You could contribute to an online discussion forum about the story or post comments on the newspapers website to keep the conversation going.*

*You could email the journalist and suggest an appropriate follow-up story, or ask the journalist any questions you might have about the story, sources, or the fact-gathering process the journalist went through.*

*You could research and write your own version of the story that might be more relevant to your school or students.*

*You could write a political analysis in response, if it’s a political story.*

*You could create a PSA about the topic, if it’s important to you.*

*You could create a blog about it.*

Here’s the catch--once you decide how to respond, there are two steps:

1. You have to DO IT

2. You have to write a final journal reflection, explaining why your response was appropriate, and how it modeled the skills of a news literate citizen. Then, give me some ideas about how you can continue to engage with this topic in the future.