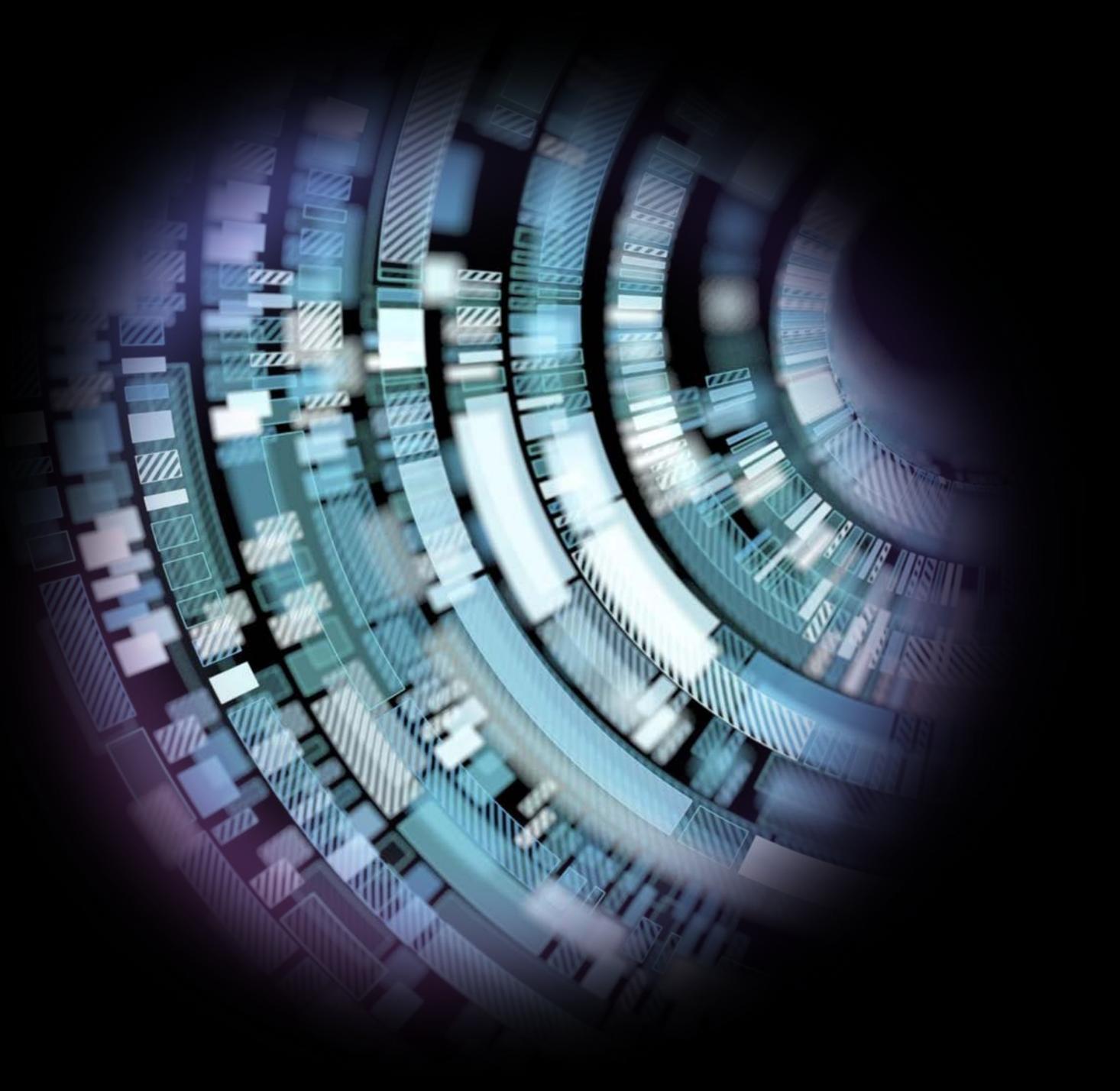


Media Literacy



The Laws of Media

“It’s like the fish in water; we don’t know who discovered the water, but we know it wasn’t a fish. A pervasive medium is always beyond perception.”

Marshall McLuhan





What is “media literacy”?

- Take a few minutes and write your
- answer to these prompts:
 - What is media literacy?
 - Why should we be media literate?

Media Literacy definition

Media literacy empowers people to be both critical thinkers and creative producers of an increasingly wide range of messages using image, language, and sound. It is the skillful application of literacy skills to media and technology messages. As communication technologies transform society, they impact our understanding of ourselves, our communities, and our diverse cultures, making media literacy an essential life skill for the 21st century.

SOURCE: Alliance for A Media Literate America, www.aamlainfo.org

What media literacy is and is not

- Set of skills, knowledge, & abilities
 - Awareness of personal media habits
 - Understanding of how media works
 - Appreciation of media's power/influence
 - Ability to discern; critically question/view
 - How meaning is created in media
 - Healthy skepticism
 - Accountability
- Media bashing
 - “Protection” against media
 - An attack on journalism
 - Stifling of free speech
 - So called “cancel culture”

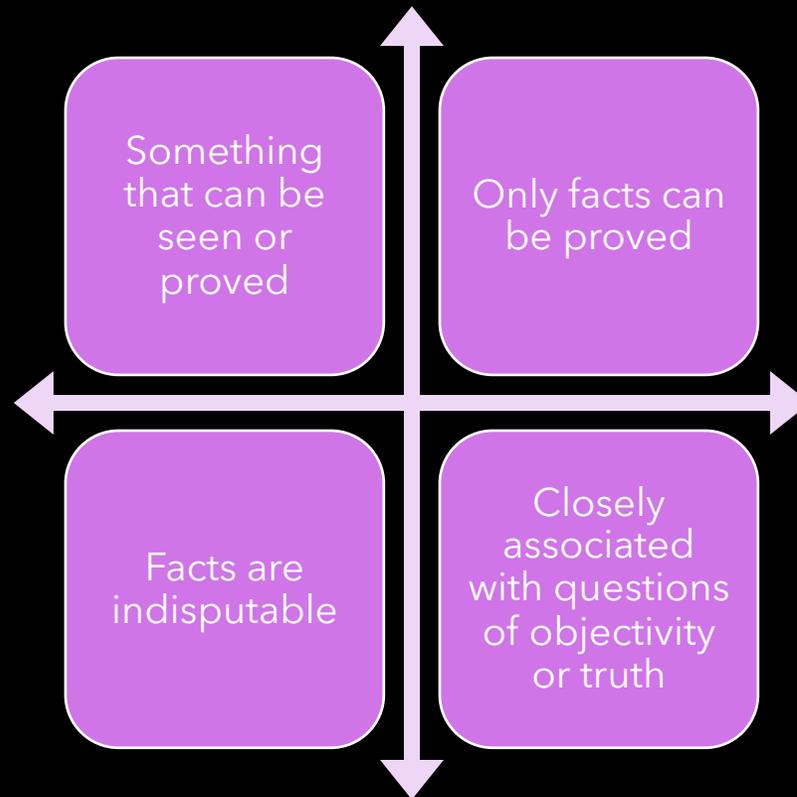




Critical Inquiry: Key Questions

- Who produced the message?
- For what purpose was it produced?
- Who is the “target audience”?
- What techniques are used to attract attention, increase believability?
- Who or what is left out; why?
- Who gains by the message being told in this way?

What is “fact”?



What is “bias”?

When a writer’s personal opinion comes through in a story or news report, he/she is revealing a bias:

Loaded words

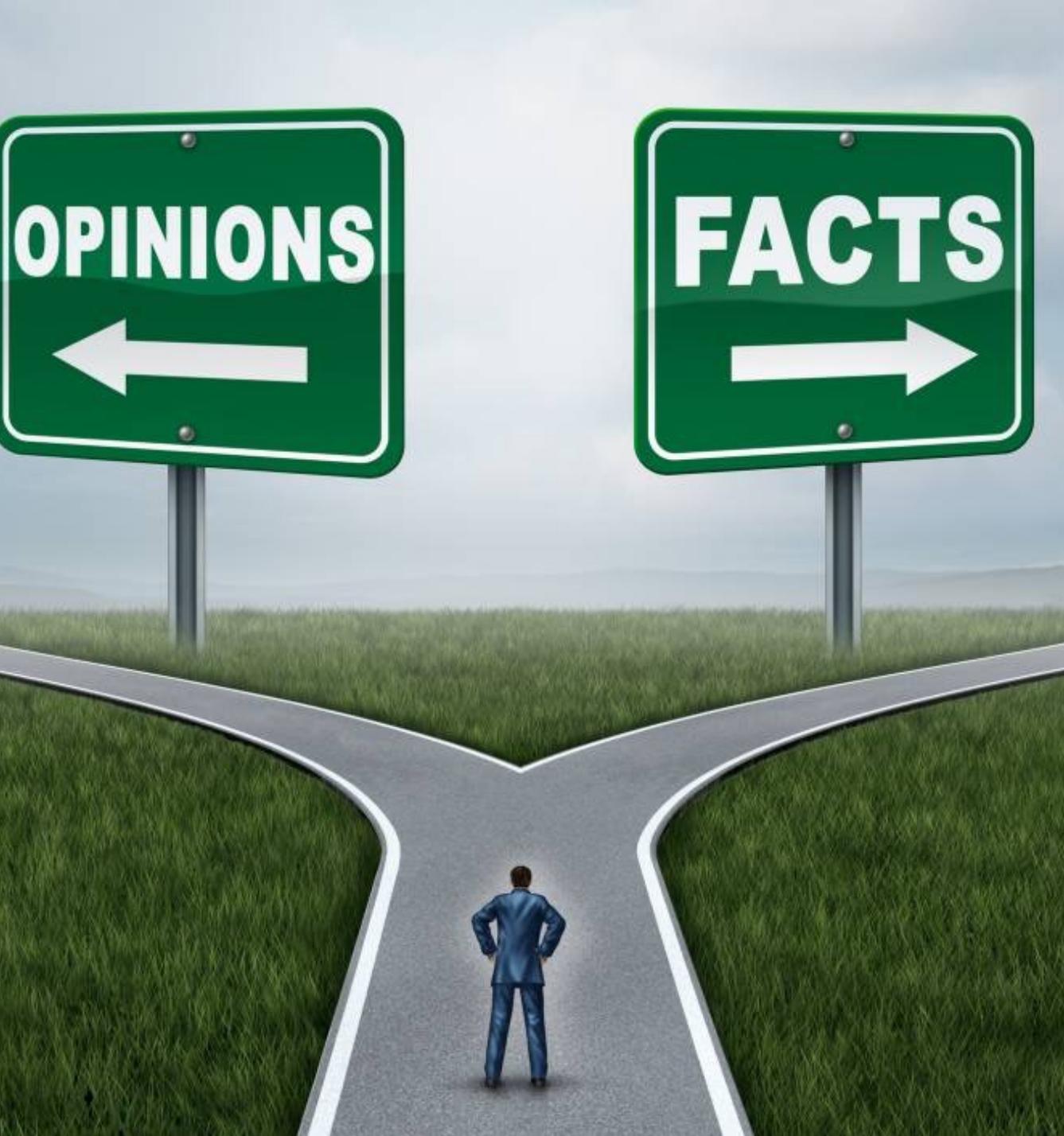
Stereotypes

One sided arguments

Facial expressions

Body language

<https://www.adfontesmedia.com/interactive-media-bias-chart/>



What is “opinion”?

- An opinion reveals what the writer believes or thinks about something
- Certain words can signal that a writer is starting an opinion:
- For example: think, probably, believe, seems, should
- However sometimes opinions are presented as facts

How Is Media Manipulated?

- Propaganda is a means to control and manage information to achieve a goal.
- It can be to shape behavior (like buying or voting) or shape public opinion.
- Techniques include
 - Subliminals
 - Non-denial denial
 - Euphemism
 - Cherry picking
 - Fear mongering
 - Disinformation/misinformation
 - Gaslighting



Subliminal: “Below Threshold”

- The word “subliminal” literally means “below threshold.”
- it means that you are not aware of the message - it is below the threshold of your conscious perception.
- You will still take the message in on some level as your subconscious mind processes it and stores this information.
- Subliminal messaging, therefore, refers to the action of sending a suggestion directly into the subconscious mind.

Information Control

- Non-Denial Denial
- Characterizing a statement as "ridiculous" or "absurd" without saying specifically that it is not true
- Saying "We are not going to dignify that with a response"
- Impugning the general reliability of a source
 - Recent attacks on news media, medical experts etc are examples of this. Calling media "fake news" or claiming that doctors are lying about the existence of covid.
- **Euphemisms** - A euphemism is a polite expression used in place of words or phrases that might otherwise be considered harsh or unpleasant.
 - Sometimes these terms are used to make people comfortable with something distressing (passed away instead of dead)
- Other times these terms are used to manipulate meaning
 - Eg. a recent article referred to a young girl who was sexually assaulted as "sex with an underage women"

Information Manipulation

- Fear mongering
- a form of manipulation which causes fear by using exaggerated rumors of impending danger
- Relying on stereotypes, worst case scenarios, threats etc.
-
- Cherry Picking
- The act of pointing at individual cases or data that seem to confirm a particular position,
- while ignoring a significant portion of related cases or data that may contradict that position.

Malicious Propaganda

- **Disinformation** is false or inaccurate information that is spread deliberately.
- It may include the distribution of forged documents, manuscripts, and photographs, or spreading malicious rumors and fabricated intelligence.
- Disinformation should not be confused with misinformation, information that is unintentionally false.
- **Gaslighting** puts forth a false narrative which leads another person (or a group of people) to doubt their own perceptions to the extent that they become disoriented and distressed.
- This often occurs when someone in power persistently insists on a something that has been proven false, to the point that others begin to doubting reality

Activity

Before Coming to Class

Find a news article from a reputable news source that deals with police violence or police brutality.

Read the news article before coming to class.

Bring a laptop/phone etc and copy (electronic or printed) of the news article to class.