

**Our study of bias in the media – a project with The Nashua Telegraph, part of the Associated Press Managing Editors National Credibility Roundtables**

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English 797, Issues in Journalism  
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**Dates to remember:**

Tuesday, Feb. 8 and Thursday, Feb. 10 – Editor Dave Solomon of The Nashua Telegraph will visit the class to train us in looking for bias in the newspaper.

Feb. 17, 24; March 3, 10, 24, 31; April 7, 14 – In class on these Thursdays, we will conduct our bias audit of the paper. You'll work in pairs and groups of three, and you'll enter the information you gather into spreadsheets.

**Tuesday, April 19, and Wednesday, April 20 – 7 to 9 p.m., in Nashua – we (you and me) will attend actual roundtables with Telegraph readers.** I'll need some students to attend each night, so please keep these dates open. We'll probably carpool there. I'll provide gas money for anyone who drives.

**Conducting the audit**

Each group or pair will be given issues of one day's Telegraph. You'll choose stories from that paper covering subjects that could be viewed with a liberal or conservative slant, such as stories about the war in Iraq or proposals to change the Social Security system.

You'll count statements – negative, positive and neutral. You'll also look at whether sources from all sides get the same play in the story, and whether the headline fits the story or seems to reflect only one part of the story. If the ratio of negative to positive statements (or vice versa) is greater than 2-1, you'll label that story as having a liberal or conservative slant.

You'll also review all columns and letters to the editors on the editorial page. You'll record the number of liberal, conservative and neutral letters and columns on the page, and you'll decide whether the political cartoons show a liberal or conservative slant.

**Assignments**

In addition to completing the audits, you'll do the following assignments in connection with this project:

Feb: 22 – One-page response paper on how we've decided to conduct the audit, including suggestions you have for changes.

March 29 – One-page response paper on what you've learned from the bias audit so far, including whether the results have been what you expected.

April 14 – In class, we'll discuss the audit results and figure out what you will tell the roundtable participants.

On April 19 and 20 – Half of the class will attend the Tuesday roundtable; half will attend on Wednesday. We'll participate in the discussion with Telegraph readers, which will be moderated by Wally Dean of the Committee of Concerned Journalists. Halfway through the discussion, you'll explain the audit and our results to the readers present.

May 5 – Five-page paper about the audit and the roundtable discussions. More details to come.