

Research Project Two: Spring 2017 – U.S. Government / AP The Political Economy of the American Mass Media

Final Due Date: Friday, May 5, 2017 (last day to turn in at full credit – late work reduced one letter grade).

Question: In their article “Democracy and a Free Press,” sociologists David Croteau and William Hoynes suggest several important reasons why freedom of the press is an essential element of a democratic system. They point to the press as serving as a watchdog against abuse by those in positions of power; as a source of substantial information for citizens about social and political issues; and providing a forum in which diverse opinions can be shared. Does the American mass media meet these goals in its coverage of important political and economic issues? And significantly, how does *corporate* ownership of the mass media affect its ability to carry out this mission?

Sample Outline

(But feel free to set this essay up as you wish)

I. Introduction / Thesis Statement – a brief statement outlining your position or something relevant about this issue.

II. Body – the bulk of the paper is here, in data taken from the readings and other evidence you have found to support your position.

A. General Media Analysis

1. The “Gatekeeper” Function (Democratic / Pluralist – Text)
2. Croteau / Hoynes analysis
3. The “Propaganda Model” (Elite Theory – Herman and Chomsky)

B. The “Corporatization” of the Mass Media

1. Is the media system a competitive market? (McChesney)
2. Is “the market” an appropriate mechanism to regulate media? (McChesney)

C. *Shadows of Liberty* and *Project Censored: The Movie* – (documentaries)

1. What information did the film contribute to the debate?
2. Contribution of the “alternative” press – positive or negative?

D. Outside DPE – is there anything else you found in website searches or the library that you think is relevant and/or important to include in this debate?

III. Conclusion – Why you believe the US mass media performed well / poorly in terms of informing Americans of what they needed to know in order to stay informed on the complexities associated with important political and economic issues of the day. What suggestions do you have for making the media more accountable?

Extras:

1. Make sure to include the APA’s form of citation for your sources *every time you use a statement or an idea from the readings that I have provided, or that you found in your own independent research*. Using other’s work without providing proper citation is plagiarism and grounds for immediate failure on this essay.

2. Please type all work and provide 1 copy of the essay, which I will return to you. This paper will constitute the second section of your final research paper.

3. An “A” paper will be: a) *fully* documented and cited; b) a *minimum* of 10 pages (including title, abstract, and reference pages); c) research *beyond* the authors I provided; d) turned in *on time* (5-5-17).