

Critical Media Consumption:

The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

Instructor's Manual



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Introduction

In the early 21st century, the traditional and new media are a key source of information that have become increasingly instrumental in the shaping of attitudes, perceptions, behaviors and identities among individuals, groups and societies. Despite the debate among researchers, journalists and politicians regarding just how powerful the influence of the media is, it is undisputed that the public must be provided with tools to consume the flow of messages in the traditional media - radio, television, newspapers - and the new Internet-based technologies in an informed manner. Nor is there any dispute regarding the need to raise the awareness that media consumers can and should judge and assess these messages with respect to their reliability and the quality of the information that they provide. This is important in places having numerous media channels - especially in societies that uphold the sanctity of the freedom of expression - as well as in societies in which freedom of speech is limited to varying extents.

In all types of societies, these needs increase during times of conflict due to their significance in areas such as personal safety and anxieties; the ability to satisfy needs-; the shaping of individual and collective identities; human and national rights and responsibilities; control over various types of tensions, etc.

Awareness of these issues in the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict led the Veneto Regional Government in Italy, sponsored by the European Union, together with parties active in these subjects in the region, to launch a wide-ranging endeavor - the Pet-Med (Peace Education Through MEDIA) Project - to learn about the problems and offer activities related to the role of the media in this ongoing conflict. Whereas other organizations within the Pet-Med project study and analyze issues related to media production and accordingly offer recommendations, *Fair Media: The Center for the Study of Conflict, War and Peace Coverage* within the School of Communication at Netanya Academic College has elected to focus on media consumers. Taking a long-range view, it decided to concentrate on important agents of change: the young men and women who will be society's future teachers and opinion leaders.

In the context of the project, *Fair Media* held three experimental semester courses for advanced students, both Jews and Arabs, at Netanya Academic College, Oranim Academic Teachers College and Levinsky Teachers College in the 2010-2011 school year.

This instructor's manual is the product of what we learned during these courses. Its goal is to aid teachers and instructors in helping students and aspiring teachers understand the role of the media in covering war, including the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and to teach the crucial skills students need so that they can become informed and critical media consumers.

The courses were held following rigorous planning and monitoring carried out by Dr. Lea Mandelzis of Netanya Academic College and Dr. Mira Feuerstein of Oranim Academic Teachers College. Dr. Mandelzis taught the course in Netanya Academic College, assisted by Haim Hagay. Michal Zak and Wafaa Zriek Srur taught the course in Oranim Academic Teachers College, under the supervision of Dr. Mira Feuerstein, and in Levinsky Teachers College, under the supervision of Dr. Lea Mandelzis.

Thanks to the talents, experience and efforts of Haim Hagay and Elie Friedman and their work on the content and administration of the project that this manual has been published.

Thanks are also due to the administrations of the institutions in which the workshops were held and the projects managers, staff from the Veneto Region, who gave their unwavering support to this educational effort.

It is our hope that this manual will make a positive and enlightening contribution to the understanding and explication of the media aspects of the conflict in our region and others, and to the educational effort required in this context.

Prof. Dov Shinar

Director of the Israeli Module of the Project

The Manual - What it is and how to use it

Dr. Lea Mandelzis

This manual is based on what was learned during the courses given in the context of the project. During the first semester of the 2010-2011 school year, the course was given at Netanya Academic College and the Oranim Academic Teachers College. During the second semester of the same year, the course was given at Levinsky Teachers College.

The course - Goals, structure and assignments

This course is a critical journey into the existing media coverage and involves a search for structures that can provide a realistic picture, as far as possible, and understanding of the complexity of today's media. The course comprises the principles of critical media consumption, assessing how the media functions, proposals involving supplementary and alternative approaches to the existing media approaches and the analysis of test cases, using examples from actual media coverage in Israel.

In the last part of the course, the students are asked to apply the material they learned and to point out bias in media coverage. They are required to propose alternatives and supplements to the texts and formulations, the design of messages and editing of material. The course combines lectures, presentations of visual materials, analysis of case studies, exercises and hands-on experience in creating media texts and messages.

The course is accompanied by theoretical and research sources, examples from actual media coverage (the materials themselves, or references) and presentations prepared in accordance with the study units. The examples and materials presented in this manual are typical of the period in which the course was given in the context of the project. It follows that they refer to that time frame (and in some cases to the place too). That is why users of this manual are advised to choose appropriate and up-to-date media examples and materials suited to the period when the manual is used. Because of difficulties in obtaining publishing rights, the editors of this manual refrained in certain cases from providing the materials themselves, and gave the relevant reference or link instead.

The Pedagogical Approach

Dr. Mira Feuerstein

From a pedagogical point of view (see also the model for critical questions in Study Unit 3), this course was based on the principles of critical media literacy, which include experiencing the critical study of media content and messages, drafting well-reasoned arguments, presenting open questions and challenging the claims and perspectives of media personalities, writers, editors and the authors of media texts, and a reflective assessment of the students' personal positions and beliefs (Hobbs, 2011¹, 2001², 1998³). This approach is grounded in critical theories that aim to develop critical thinking and an in-depth understanding of how the media work and what the considerations are that guide those steering the media in shaping and structuring reality, and in this case, the reality of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

In the spirit of this approach, the study units are based on activities that involve analysis and critical assessment related to events and subjects presented in the media, by means of an open and critical dialogue between lecturers and students, in addition to hands-on experience on the part of the students in producing texts carrying alternative messages through the active use of media technologies. The basic principle calls for learning through experience, which places the students in the role of the authors of messages - using both traditional and digital media - and thereby giving them the opportunity to make an informed assessment of the implications that the media have for society and for them as an audience. In the broader sense, these activities will hopefully encourage them to take an active role in media consumption, as thinking people in a society brimming with information and technology. They will be equipped with knowledge and media skills that enable them to respond to the media reality and express their critical positions as they impact the media and ensure the quality of the information stream in a democratic society in the age of the Internet and social networks. The use of media technologies is friendly and creates diverse possibilities for personal and creative expression in various and sundry formats such as the production of a YouTube clip, blogging, forums, social networks, etc., all of which can broaden their media literacy and understanding, and empower them as active and involved citizens in a democracy.

¹ Hobbs, R. (2011). *Digital and media literacy: Connecting culture and classroom*, USA, CA: Corwin.

² Hobbs, R. (1998). *Media literacy in Massachusetts*. In: Andrew Hart (Ed.) *Teaching the media: International perspectives*. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum Associates.

³ Hobbs, R (2001). «Media Literacy in the Classroom.» *Newsweek* <http://school.newsweek.com/pages/extra_media_literacy.htm>.

Study Unit One - Background, Rationale and Goals

Goals

- Participants get to know one another
- Getting to know the subject
- A general discussion on criticism of media coverage

Structure

Viewing a film on the subject (e.g. the opening scenes of Daniel Schechter’s film)

- Discussion following the viewing of the film
- Presentation of course structure
- Presentation of the next assignment accompanied by an example

Sample materials

Daniel Schechter’s film WMD: Weapons of Mass Deception (the link is included in the sample database in the accompanying disk).

Unit plan

- Introductions
 - Each participant will introduce himself and describe an event or subject covered by the media about which the student has doubts or criticism.
- The instructor will sum up the examples presented by the students. For example, the examples can be divided into different categories:
 - **Quantitative aspects** - What is the criticism referring to - to exaggerated coverage or under-coverage of certain events, or both?
 - **Content** - Does the criticism relate to the way in which certain events were framed?
 - **Object of the criticism** - Does the criticism target structural or professional aspects of the media, or is it directed personally at particular journalists? At which medium is the criticism directed - a television station? Radio station? Newspaper? Website?
- Getting into the subject of the conflict - What are the constitutive events of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict?
- What are the sources of information that we have on the conflict?
- Viewing a film (For example, the first 10 minutes of Daniel Schechter’s film). It is recommended to choose a film that relates to the dominant role played by the media in framing reality and shaping opinions, and its role in slanting them by supporting or opposing one of the sides.

Questions when leading discussion after viewing

1. What is the film’s message?
 - It is acceptable for students to present views that reflect the critical message of the film as well as those that criticize the critical message itself (criticism of the criticism)?

Background, Rationale and Goals

2. Link to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict - Have you ever cast doubt on the credibility of a media text relating to the conflict?
 - Is it appropriate to compare the positions presented by the film in relation to the war in Iraq in Schechter's film to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict?
3. Why do we need criticism of media coverage?

Suggestion for managing the unit:

- During the discussion, it is a good idea to dwell on the differences in language and word choice between the Jewish and Arab participants:
 - War of Independence/Nakba; separation fence/security fence, etc.

Example of a task for the next study unit

- Choose two groups of students who will present at the next session a headline/picture/article that they have chosen and to explain:
 1. Why did they choose it? What caught their attention?
 2. How is it related to the conflict?
 3. What criticism can be posed regarding its content?

Possible example⁴

The attached article appeared in *Israel Hayom* on November 8, 2010 (in Hebrew):

Discussion - What criticism can be presented to it?

- What is the position of the newspaper?
- Where does the information come from? What or who is the source of the news item?
- Is there a disparity between the headline and the content?
- What claim/s is/are presented?
- How is the claim established?
- Who is the reporter?

כך קובע מחקר של המרכז הירושלמי לענייני ציבור ומדינה • "מדובר בזכות פרטית של כל פנים, כך שלמעשה להנהגה הפלשתינית אין סמכות לוותר עליה"



⁴ The discussion leader is advised to find an example relevant to the time when the course is given.

Study Unit Two - Basic Concepts

Goals

- The student should understand and be able to identify the concepts of framing, priming, and agenda setting.

Structure

1. Screening of a film (for example: an episode from the series Ordinary People) and a discussion following the viewing.
2. The presentation of basic theoretical concepts: agenda setting, framing, priming.
3. Screening of a film excerpt for viewing (e.g.; an excerpt from Daniel Schechter's film) and a discussion following the viewing.

In the sample database, the following resource material can be found:

- An excerpt from the series Ordinary People - "Journalist's Eye".
- An excerpt from Daniel Schechter's film WMD: Weapons of Mass Deception.

Recommended reading

Levy, D. "The ideological role of television news: The case of the Intifada on Channel 1 News," *Patuah - Journal of Communication*, 1, Bar-Ilan University, pp. 9-30.

Unit plan:

Screening of a sample film: the episode "Journalist's Eye" from the series Ordinary People. The excerpt depicts an ordinary day in the life of each of the film's protagonists: an Israeli television reporter, a British television reporter and a Palestinian television reporter.

Discussion after viewing the film:

1. What were the techniques used to create prominence?
 - It is suggested to discuss the choice of protagonists, the narratives, soundtrack, camera angles, etc.
2. Which reporters were perceived as biased in your opinion, and in what direction did they lean? Which appeared more professional?

The film provides a rare glimpse into news reporters' work practices and decision-making processes. The reporters' work routine requires them to present short film segments, which are supposed to represent the occurrences of an entire day. Each reporter chose to present and focus on different subjects, despite the fact that they all filmed and covered the same material.

The camera and editing work are not neutral because they involve processes of **selection, framing, and priming**. Consequently, the importance of being aware of the context and having previous knowledge of the subject being presented should be emphasized before the students.

Defining Concepts

The classic perception of the role of the media is to report and cover through the presentation of facts, while tangibly separating opinions, personal philosophy and commentary from the coverage of events - in other words, impartial reporting based on facts. The journalist is expected to report using clear, simple language and to present all the sides and positions so as to present what happened in a fair and balanced manner. From this it follows that the role of the journalist in a democratic country is:

1. To provide equal and balanced representation for the different sides or competing views.
2. To provide an accurate and concrete factual description, not a story or legend.
3. To use neutral language.

Discussion - Is this the Case?

It would appear that it is not. At present, media scholars agree that journalists do not reflect reality (an impossible mission, perhaps), but rather structure reality by means of their choices, framing and emphasis of content. This approach finds expression in the "tradition of later effects" in the study of the media that started to develop in the 1960s, and shifted the research emphasis from the study of the direct behavioral effects of the media to the study of the indirect and cumulative effects.

Agenda The agenda-setting approach presented the argument that even if the media does not have the power to determine for the public what to think, it has the power to set priorities for it, or in other words, to tell it what to think about (McCombs & Shaw, 1972). By highlighting certain subjects and downplaying others, the media generates a public discourse that sends a message to the public regarding which subjects are important and about what it is more important to think.

Framing Every event covered by the media is made up of many different details, so that in the context of the media coverage, which is restricted by constraints of time and space, they cannot all be represented. Consequently, the choice made by the journalist or editor of a particular perspective through which to cover an event is a choice made within a particular frame that gives meaning to the reported events (Caspi, 2001). It is a choice of a central conceptual line that creates a "frame" for the information, which situates it within a certain context and directs the way the audience gives it meaning. In this way, the media can impact the formation of individual opinions and shape public opinion in any area.

Priming The media rates the importance of subjects using techniques involving editing, location, size, color, pictures, etc. for example, the choice to begin or conclude a news edition with a particular subject, or to place the coverage of a subject on the front page marks it for the audience as particularly important.

Brief Discussion - How can the term "news" be defined?

It is advisable to base the discussion on the students' responses.

Possible definitions:

- News: The latest report on what is happening in the country and the world, new information about interesting and/or important events.
- News: What is important, current and relevant for the public to know in their daily lives.

- News: What is important for the public to know in order to maintain a proper democratic society.
- News: Presents reality as a dramatic confrontation between sides.

Presentation of Terms

Hard news: Reports on political, military, criminal, current affairs considered essential by journalists and editors in the print, broadcast and online media.

Soft news: Personal/human interest stories, background and stories with “color.”

“Open news”: A balanced, neutral news story that allows the media consumer to decide the meaning of event covered by the media on their own.

“Closed news”: A presentation that determines the meaning of the covered event, which does not leave the consumer any possibility of determining the meaning of the covered event on his or her own.

Changes in the role and profession of the journalist

Screening of clips (see the sample database)

Examples:

1. “Journalist’s eye” - The opening scene of the film, in which the protagonists - the writers doing the coverage - introduce themselves.
2. Second excerpt - The part that sums up the journalists’ identification with the fighters - a journalist who claims that although she identifies with the fighters, she can still do her job properly.



Discussion:

1. How are the reporters perceived by the students? (as advocacy journalists or as critical reporters?)
2. What is the meaning of the journalist’s work: to reflect the reality of war / criticize how it is being waged / present a balanced picture / serve the national interest?
3. What is the impact of the covering journalist’s empathy with the object of the coverage? (It is advisable to point out that academic research has yet to provide clear-cut answers to this question and only hypotheses can be raised at this point.)
4. How should media consumers deal with this matter?
 - By maintaining skepticism and becoming familiar with the media map - by consuming a number of different media channels, understanding the agenda of the media and the reporter covering the event, understanding the terminology that is used to mark out the proposed agenda.

In Summary: Experience practicing the terms (pages 13-14) by analyzing items that deal with coverage of the conflict brought by the students to the class.

The following articles were used in the courses (available on the accompanying disk containing the sample database):



Questions for discussion:

1. Are there any differences between the reports?
Attention should be paid to the sources of the information and the prominence given to the claims of each of the sides.
2. How do the headlines frame the news event?
3. Who is served by the item in each of the newspapers and at what audience is it aimed (relate to the photographs accompanying the texts)?
4. What critical argument could be directed at the organizations covering the event?

Preparation for the next study unit: The Zionist and Palestinian narratives

Group exercise to identify the differences between the narrative of the Nakba and that of the Independence Day according to the book by Adwan and Bar-On (2008) - see the example database.

Study Unit Three - The Zionist and Palestinian Narratives

Goals

- The students will become familiar with the concept of *narrative* and learn about the terms “Zionist narrative” and “Palestinian narrative.”

Structure

- Discussion of the concept “narrative”.
- Presentation and discussion of essential aspects of the Zionist narrative.
- Presentation and discussion of essential aspects of the Palestinian narrative.
- Final discussion on an excerpt from the book by Bar-On and Adwan.

Recommended reading (the examples are in the database)

What is a narrative?

Yadgar, Y. (2004). *Our Story: The National Narrative in the Israeli Media*. Haifa: Haifa University, pp. 11-20.

The Zionist Narrative

Gabison, R. (2002). “The Jews’ Right To Statehood: A Defense”. *Azure*. Summer 2003, 15, <http://www.azure.org.il/article.php?id=239>.

Adwan, S., Bar-On, D. & Naveh, E. (2008). *Side by Side: Competing Histories of Israel/Palestine*. Peace Research Institute in the Middle East (PRIME).

Yadgar, Y. (2004). *Our Story: The National Narrative in the Israeli Media*. Haifa: Haifa University, pp. 195-200.

The Palestinian Narrative

Adwan, S., Bar-On, D. & Naveh, E. (2008). *Side by Side: Competing Histories of Israel/Palestine*. Peace Research Institute in the Middle East (PRIME).

Kizel, A. “Shaping memory in history textbooks for Arabs schools in Israel - 1948-2008”. Retrieved on September 13, 2010 from <http://akizel.blogspot.com>.

Kabha, M. (2006). “The Arab press in Israel 1948-2006, as an apparatus in the identity-building process”. *Herzog Institute of Communications*. No. 5 (December 2006). Tel Aviv: Tel-Aviv University.

Newspaper texts for discussion:

Or Kashti. “The Ministry of Education instructs high school to stop teaching the Arab version of the conflict alongside the Zionist one”. *Haaretz*. September 27, 2010, <http://www.haaretz.co.il/hasite/spages/1190986.html>.

Avner Ben Amos. “Not only our perspective”. *Haaretz*. October 4 2010, <http://www.haaretz.co.il/hasite/spages/1192008.html>.

Nir Boms and Ido Mizrahi. “A state in exchange for a narrative”. *Haaretz*. October 10, 2010, <http://www.haaretz.co.il/hasite/spages/1192924.html?more=1>.

The Zionist and Palestinian Narratives

Unit Plan

- Introduction - What is a narrative?
- Lesson 1 - The Zionist narrative
- Lesson 2 - The Palestinian narrative

It is suggested that the instructors relate to the following points:

Part 1 - What is a narrative?

The word *narrative* comes from Latin. It can be translated as “he related” which is in fact a certain interpretation of a certain aspect of the world that is shaped through a cultural or personal perspective. In other words, there is a certain degree of “subjectivity” involved that has become legitimate in this era of postmodern theories. The narrative is shaped as part of a process of framing - there is no absolute truth.

It is important to note the distinction between approaches that assume the existence of a single truth and those that do not assume the existence of a single absolute truth. Today, in the first quarter of the 21st century, we are living in an age of multiple narratives and of relativistic approaches to reality. It is accepted today to look at the stories of history as the **shaping of the past** by their narrators and not necessarily as an **accurate representation of the past**.

- The national narrative as a process - The national narrative, like every narrative, is a dynamic concept that evolves and changes over the years as a result of the struggle between various narratives over the hegemony. It is recommended here to relate to the changes that the Zionist narrative has undergone by discussing Yadgar’s findings (2004).
- The importance of getting to know the narrative of the other - The Israeli narrative was constructed, in part, by the negation of the narrative of the other, and vice versa.

It is recommended to invite expert guest lecturers on the Zionist narrative and on the Palestinian narrative. In the experimental courses held in Netanya Academic College and Oranim, the Zionist narrative was presented by journalist Danny Rubinstein and Dr. Aryeh Kizel, a lecturer at Oranim Academic Teachers College. In the lessons on the Palestinian narrative, the presentations were given by Nazir Majali, an Israeli Arab writer and journalist, and Dr. Mary Tutri, the head of Civics and Democracy Studies in Oranim Academic Teachers College. Teachers are advised to invite guest lecturers of their choice.

The Zionist Narrative

- Zionism as a secular revolution within Judaism that spoke of the transition from Diaspora to rebirth.
 - Characteristics of the Diaspora: passivity, waiting for the Messiah, religion.
 - Characteristics of rebirth: activism by the New Jew, taking one’s fate into one’s own hands, nation, peoplehood, the right to self-determination.
- Reviving the language, redeeming the land - Zionism tries to create facts on the ground, symbols and ceremonies to reach most Jews in Israel.
- The Declaration of Independence - “the natural and historic right” of the Jewish people to the land of Israel.
- The war of 1948 - The War of Independence and the Nakba.

The Zionist and Palestinian Narratives

- The melting pot - Zionism sets in motion an aggressive course of action to create a single new culture.
- The Zionist narrative as a democratic narrative.
- Competing Jewish narratives - Is there a contradiction between a Jewish and democratic state and a state of all its citizens?

The Palestinian narrative

The Palestinian people - The Palestinian people was defined as such after the conflict began in the late 19th century (the Palestinians were always part of the Arab nation). Nevertheless, their definition as a nation should not be taken lightly. At the same time, by virtue of the natural right of a large public to define itself as a collective, the self-determination of the Palestinians as a nation should not be dismissed. Because every narrative is dynamic in nature, the Palestinian narrative was constructed vis-à-vis the Zionist one with the beginning of the conflict in the late 19th century.

Historical survey:

- Ottoman Period - A religious rather than national conflict:
 - Discussion of a shared history - There are a number of examples that show that in the Arabic language and culture in the past, the Jews were perceived as especially trustworthy. Today, however, the Arab narrative eradicates all these examples from the Arab discourse.
 - Discussion of the Zionist immigration and the Arab opposition.
- The British Mandate period - the Jewish-Arab conflict:
 - The beginning of the struggle - Following the Balfour Declaration, the Arabs began to suspect that a plot had been hatched to establish a Jewish state. The war was directed mainly against the British. The Palestinian narrative identified a plot between the British and the Jews, the aim of which was to establish a Jewish state and abolish the Arabs' rights. The Arabs feared mainly for Jerusalem.
 - The Arab Revolt.
- The Partition Plan - The Decision by the Arab League.
- The 1948 war:
 - The Palestinian political, economic and educational leadership and how it functioned in 1948.
 - The expulsion.
 - The reasons for the failure of the struggle:
 - The pan-Arab narrative - A great imperialist plot.
 - The Palestinian narrative - A plot on the part of the Arab leadership, the British and the Zionists.
 - The Palestinian refugees.
- The period of the military government.
- The Naksa - 1967.
- 1993 - The Oslo process.
- From Oslo to the Al-Aqsa intifada - the Palestinian Authority and how it relates to Israel.
- From the Al-Aqsa intifada to the present - The pullout from Gaza and the strengthening of Hamas.

Summary and Discussion

Discussion of the text on the Nakba from the book by Adwan and Bar-On (2008): *Side by Side: Competing Histories of Israel/Palestine* (the chapter is included in the example database).

Discussion question:

1. Who are the authors of the narratives in the book?
 - A discussion on why it is important to become familiar with the authors of the narrative as part of the critical approach - national, gender, ethnic, class identity, etc. The exclusion of the female voice from both narratives is notable.
2. What characterizes each of the narratives?
 - Personal stories vs. national stories.
 - "Factual" stories vs. myths.
 - Figures - Authoritative figures in the Israeli narrative (historians, commanders, fighters) vs. the writer and eyewitnesses in the Palestinian narrative.
 - Narrative of victims.
3. What motifs were used in the narrative? What are the prevalent images used in each?
 - Motifs - Maps, songs, pictures, cartoons (Naji Al- Ali).
4. Which of the narratives offers a more critical approach to its own narrative?

Study Unit Four - What is Criticism? Critical Media Literacy

Goals

Getting to know the model of critical media literacy.

Structure

Part 1 - Presentation of the model for critical media literacy.

Part 2 - Discussion of a test case - the military correspondent.

Recommended reading (items are included in the sample database):

- Baudrillard, J. (2001). "The Gulf War Did Not Take Place". In M. Poster (ed.) *Jean Baudrillard: Selected Writings*. Palo Alto: Stanford University Press.
- First, A. & Avraham, E. (2004). *Coverage of Israeli Arabs in Israeli Media*. Tel Aviv: Tami Steinmetz Center for Peace Research. [in Hebrew]
- Neiger, M., Zandberg, E. & Meyers, O. (2008). "The Rhetoric of Criticism: Challenging Criticism, Reaffirming Criticism, and Israeli Journalism during the Second Lebanon War". *The Media in the Lebanon War series*. Tel-Aviv: The Rothschild-Caesarea School of Communication, Tel Aviv University [in Hebrew].
- Shinar, D. (2008). "Media Tales of War and Peace: Roeh's Work as a Springboard". In: M. Neiger, M. Blondheim and T. Liebes (Eds.), *Coverage as Story: Looking at Media Discourse in Israel (In Honor of Yitzhak Roeh)*. Jerusalem: Magnes [Hebrew], pp. 69-84.

Additional optional reading:

- Mandelzis, L. (2003). "The changing image of the enemy in the news discourse of Israeli newspapers, 1993-1994". *Conflict & Communication Online*. 2 (1), www.cco.regener-online.de.
- Dor, D. (2001). *Media under Influence*. Tel Aviv: Babel, pp. 15-71.
- Liebes, T. (2003). *Communications as Culture - Part 1: The Place of the Text in the Study of the Media*. Tel Aviv: The Open University, pp. 7-18.
- Liebes, T., Kama, A. & Talmon, A. (2003). *Communications as Culture - Part 2*. Tel Aviv: The Open University, Chapter 11, pp. 129-135.
- Keshev (2007). *Media-Monitoring Project: More than Words - "War up to the Last Minute" - The Israeli Media in the Second Lebanon War*. Keshev - The Center for the Protection of Democracy in Israel.
- Kellner, D. (2003). "'Cultural Studies, Multiculturalism, and Media Culture". In T. Liebes, T., Kama, A. & Talmon, A. (Eds.), *Communications as Culture - Television as Daily Culture Environment, A Reader*. Vol. 1. Tel Aviv: The Open University, pp. 13-26.

What is Criticism? Critical Media Literacy

Unit Plan

Part 1 - What is criticism? Presenting the model for critical media literacy

- Is it necessary to understand the characteristics of critical thinking in order to present criticism in regard to media texts?

Short discussion - What is critical thinking?

- Critical thinking has been discussed for hundreds of years. Socrates may have been the first to analyze this subject more than 2,000 years ago, although John Dewey is typically considered the father of the modern tradition dealing with critical thinking. He called it reflective thinking and defined it as follows: "Active, persistent, and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds that support it and the further conclusion to which it tends." Robert Ennis defined critical thinking as "reasonable reflective thinking focused on deciding what to believe or do (Ennis, 1995).⁵
- In the age of information technology, it is important to educate towards the active use of knowledge and not to focus on rote learning in the educational process. Those who engage in critical thinking not only criticize, but are also able to reexamine their positions when exposed to a new viewpoint. The four elements that make up critical thinking are:

Rhetorical criticism:

The ability to critically analyze the components of an argument.

Criticism of tradition:

Criticism directed at traditional knowledge and accepted modes of behavior, which are perceived as self-evident.

Criticism of authority:

Criticism towards the dominant viewpoint and the ability to relate to and accept a number of different opinions and viewpoints.

Criticism of knowledge:

The very understanding that knowledge is political in essence and that the world is not free of values, positions and philosophies.

⁵ Robert H. Ennis, "Critical thinking and subject specificity: Clarification and needed research," *Educational Researcher* 18, No. 3 (1989).

What is Criticism? Critical Media Literacy

What are the characteristics of critical thinking?

To examine the clarity and validity of the arguments and reasons.	To identify conclusions and actions and to be able to understand and evaluate them.	To identify assumptions and values.
To cast doubt in regard to arguments, behaviors, and to suspend judgment.	To confront assumptions from a new perspective.	To recognize the existence of different viewpoints.

What is media literacy?

Some of the most outstanding theorists and organizations that defined the concept of media literacy are:

NAMLE, 2009⁶, Buckingham, 2003⁷, Hobbs, 2011⁸, Masterman, 1985⁹; Bazalgette, 1997¹⁰

Media literacy refers to the ability of the individual to produce meaning from visual, audio and verbal messages presented in media texts, out of an awareness of their power and ability to influence him. The core of media literacy is the ability to hold a dialogue with the media text and to present critical questions about what is seen, read or heard.

Critical media literacy touches on the ability to:

1. Present a critical position in relation to media presentations and the discourse going on in them.
2. Form an informed worldview in the face of the media values and their manipulative power.
3. To become a wise consumer of information and media whose actions are based on the concept of civic responsibility in a democratic society.

Media literacy is sustained by its two older “sisters”:

1. Classic-linguistic literacy:
 - “Literacy is the degree to which the individual is able to be involved in the world of culture with its different areas and roles, in the written, spoken, read, heard and viewed linguistic culture.”¹¹

⁶ NAMLE-(2009)National Association for Media Literacy Education. <http://namle.net/>

⁷ Buckingham, D. (2003). *Media education: Literacy, learning, and contemporary culture*. Cambridge, U.K.: Polity Press.

⁸ Hobbs, R. (2011). *Digital and media literacy: Connecting culture and classroom, USA, CA*: Corwin

⁹ Materman, L. (1985). *Teaching the media*. London, Comedia.

¹⁰ Bazalgette, C. (1997). “An agenda for the second phase of media literacy development”. In R. Kubey (Ed.), *Media Literacy in the Information Age: Current Perspectives*, New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction, pp. 69-78.

¹¹ Sapir Dictionary, p. 28 (1997). Tel Aviv: Hed Artzi.

What is Criticism? Critical Media Literacy

2. Social literacy:

- “This is the culture of the discourse, communication and interpersonal relations, and the society-cultural ecology of the individual in the family and society” (Givon, 1977).¹²

Why do we need critical thinking in regard to the media?

- The media structure knowledge about the world and advance dominant values in society and culture.
- In the age of the media, individuals, and especially children shape their identity and worldview by means of media images.

What is the meaning of using critical thinking in regard to the media?

- Posing questions that challenge obvious meanings transmitted in the text.
- The ability to produce in-depth meaning from media texts through the critical analysis of their cultural and media images, narratives, and codes.
- The ability to develop a critical awareness in regard to the values and worldviews that the media promotes - exposure of the social-cultural ideologies underlying the text.
- Wise consumption of media information based on civic responsibility in a democratic society.

The basic assumptions of critical media literacy (Kellner, 1995)¹³:

The media structures reality - all the messages presented in the media are structured messages.

The media representation of reality (of events, people, places) impacts how the audience perceives them.

The interpretation of media messages are a result of the interaction between different people and audiences and the text and culture.

The media messages are created in political, economic and social contexts.

Every medium is characterized by the unique language, genres and symbols that distinguish it.

¹² Givon, Y. (1997). *Education in the Test of Time*. The Network of Literacies: A Profile of Literacy as Multifaced, (pp. 62-76). Tel Aviv University: Ramot.

¹³ Kellner, D (1995) *Media Culture. Cultural Studies, Identity, and Politics between the Modern and the Postmodern*. London and New York: Routledge.

Discussion - How does one make an argument and support it?

Behind critical thinking is a long list of prominent theoreticians, the ground-breakers being John Passmore (1980)¹⁴ and Robert Ennis (1985;¹⁵ 1987¹⁶).

Robert Ennis (1987), among the pioneering theorists in the field of critical thinking, defined it as reasonable reflective thinking focused on deciding what to believe or do.

Ennis includes in his definition a taxonomy of 14 **dispositions** (such as to see a clear expression of a thesis or question, to seek reasons, to be well informed, etc.) and twelve **capabilities** of critical thinking (such as to be clear on what happened, to base oneself on reasonable criteria for judgment, to draw logical conclusions, etc.).

The basic areas of critical thinking capabilities are: **clarity**, **basis**, **inference** and **reciprocal relations**. We want to be **clear** in regard to what is happening, to have a reasonable **basis** on which to pass judgment, our **inference** must be **logical** and our **reciprocal relations** with others should be sensitive, and the dispositions of our critical thinking should be active.

On this background, we will focus on the arguments that represent the central component in the individual's ability to be conversant with what is happening around him or her, such as: to identify conclusions, to identify reasons that were presented and were not presented, to identify similarities and differences, to identify and deal with things that are irrelevant, to distinguish the structure of the argument, to define terms and to identify assumptions in order to mutually assess arguments and sum up.

The goal facing us when dealing with arguments is for the students to be capable of contending with simple and complex arguments in the reality surrounding them, including those presented in the media, those that are overt and those that are implied, to know how to assess them properly, to know how to deal with opinions, people and events that are mediated in a media environment.

The strategy of the argument

Components of the argument: Claim and rationale.

An argument is based on explanations, evidence and knowledge.

It is important to distinguish between an explanation, evidence and a claim.

¹⁴ Passmore, J. (1980) «On teaching to be critical,” In: J. Passmore (1980), *The Philosophy of Teaching*. London: Duckworth, pp.166-182.

¹⁵ Ennis, R. (1985). “A logical basis for measuring critical thinking skills”. *Educational Leadership*. pp. 44-48.

¹⁶ Ennis, R. H. (1987). “A Taxonomy of critical thinking dispositions and abilities”. in: J.B. Baron & R. J. Sternberg (Eds). *Teaching thinking skills: Theory and practice*. New York: W.H. Freeman and Company, pp. 9-26.

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Becoming familiar with the terms

A claim: A statement with which the truth, validity and justice that can be argued. A claim can include: a determination, position, opinion, decision, hypothesis, conclusion or theory.

Rationale: A statement the goal of which is to support and consolidate a claim:

1. An evidence-based rationale answers the question: How do I know if the claim is real? It presents facts and data that support the claim. It requires proof.
2. A rationale of the explanation type answers the question: What are the causes or reasons for the claim?



Example:

The Jewish state will continue to exist over time only if it is possible to defend it both physically as well as morally.

In the past, I assumed that there was no more need to demonstrate the legitimacy of a Jewish state than there was for any other nation state, and I did not take claims to the contrary very seriously, and I preferred to focus my affairs on examining the possibility of integrating the Jewish element and the democratic element of the state, as emerges from the definition of the state as it appears in the Basic Laws of January 1992.

However, today I realize that my view was wrong. The repudiation of Israel's right to exist as a Jewish state is now a commonly held position, and one that is increasingly seen as legitimate.

- Among Israeli Arabs, for example, it is nearly impossible to find anyone willing to endorse, at least publicly, the right of Jews to national self-determination in the land of Israel.
- More worrisome, perhaps, is the fact that many Jews in Israel agree with this view, or at least show a measure of sympathy for it. Some of the Jews committed to promoting the causes of democracy, human rights, and universal norms are, knowingly or not, assisting efforts to turn Israel into a neutral, liberal state - "a state of all its citizens," as it is commonly called.
- The argument I will present here is framed mainly within the discourse of human rights, including the right of peoples, under certain conditions, to self-determination. Such an argument begins by recognizing the uniqueness of peoples and by acknowledging as a universal principle their right to preserve and develop that uniqueness.

Excerpted from: Gabison, R. (2002). "The Jews' Right To Statehood: A Defense." *Azure*, Summer 2003, 15. <http://www.azure.org.il/article.php?id=239>.

What are the criteria need to assess arguments?

1. Relevance - Does the argument support the claim and if so, to what extent?
2. Reliability - To what extent can one rely on the truth of the argument?
3. Clarity - Is the argument clear and comprehensible?

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4. Unambiguous - To what extent is the argument unambiguous or open to interpretation?
5. Acceptable - To what extent is the argument acceptable in the area of knowledge in which it is presented?
6. Can an argument expressing a different approach be raised?
7. How does the implementation of the strategy of the argument help to understand the different approaches in the study of culture?

Part 2 - Discussion of a case study - The military correspondent

Presentation of excerpt (example: an excerpt from *Media File* - Yariv Oppenheimer (Chairman of Peace Now) and Or Heller (military correspondent for Channel 10) (Included in the sample database).



1. What is the perspective of each of the speakers?
 - A distinction should be made between a perspective that expresses a philosophy and overt opinion, and the content of what is said.
 - Oppenheimer's perspective: The Israeli media functions as a collaborator of the IDF Spokesperson.
 - Heller's perspective: A critical position towards his own role as a journalist, while also relating to the organizational and structural constraints that impact the nature of the coverage.
2. What is the structural difficulty that the military correspondent presents?
 - Geographical limitation - It is not permitted to enter Gaza.
 - Limited sources of information - military censorship, soldiers may not be interviewed.
 - Rating constraints - Economic considerations require immediacy and limit the possibility of cross checking information.
3. What is the role of the military correspondent?
 - It is important to relate to the tension that exists between reflecting reality and taking a position that adopts hegemonic nationalist positions.
4. What are the objectives of the military correspondent?
 - To present the public with confirmed and relevant facts about the event.
 - To present them in a balanced and well-reasoned manner so that the audience can form their own informed and reasonable opinion that is not based on momentary manipulation by the government (it should be borne in mind that politicians have other interests).
 - A balanced and well-reasoned presentation does not require emotional empathy with the side

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of the “other” or disconnection from one’s collective identity.

- A news report that combines opinion is a misleading report that creates a false pretense of objectivity and deepens the bias in the report.
5. How should these journalistic texts be read?
 - A distinction should be made between opinion pieces and news reports.

Why are the media important in a democratic society?

1. Freedom of expression - a platform for public discussion.
2. The public’s right to know.
3. The watchdog of democracy - an informal mechanism to oversee democracy.

What are the weak points of the media as they emerge from the excerpt shown above and in general?

1. The media underplays certain facts in the discourse and gives prominence to others.
2. Israeli journalists easily adopt the positions of the Israeli establishment.
3. The journalists reflect and foster the collective Israeli identity and do not present critical positions vis-à-vis the establishment.

What are the objectives of the journalist?

1. To present proven and relevant facts on an event
2. To present them in a balanced and well-reasoned manner so that the audience can form their own informed and reasonable opinion that is not based on momentary manipulation by the government (it should be borne in mind that politicians have other interests).

The factual worldview of the audience is based first and foremost on the news pages (especially the headlines). Consequently, it is important to make a clear distinction between opinion articles that appear in supplements and on the inside pages of the newspaper and news texts that cover events.

A balanced and well-reasoned presentation does not mean that one must identify emotionally with the “other” or disconnect from one’s collective identity. However, news reporting that combines one’s own opinion is filtered and misleading, and deepens the bias in reporting. The publication of a critical opinion piece, on the one hand, and biased and censored reporting on the news pages, on the other, create a false pretense of objectivity. What are needed are balance, neutrality, objectivity, professionalism and consensus. These are the ideological principles of the media.

Journalists face a professional dilemma - they ascribe importance to the critical interpretation of the events they cover, although the public does not always ascribe similar importance to objective reporting.

The media supply identification with conventions that are consistent with the prevalent views in society.

Study Unit Five - Theoretical Models for Media Criticism

Goals

- The student will become familiar with the T.A.P. model and the Keshev model for the critical analysis of the media.

Structure

1. Presentation of the TAP model.
2. Presentation of the Keshev model.
3. A critical analysis of a recent example using these two models.

Unit plan

The model for a critical study of the media includes three elements:

1. Authorship and audiences - (what channel, reporter, agenda, target audience).
2. Messages and meanings - (what is transmitted in the text, main ideas in the media framing).
3. Representations and reality - (to what extent does the coverage represent reality, language, techniques, images).

Key questions to ask when analyzing media messages (Namle [National Association for Media Literacy Education], 2009)

The T.A.P. model - Text, Audience, Production

The theoretical framework for media criticism

The theoretical framework is anchored in the area of media literacy education based on the assumption¹⁷ that the media do not transmit or reflect reality as it is, but rather frame and represent it by means of methods or symbols (or signs), and in order to understand them, the audience must take an active and critical role.

Based on this assumption, over the years, a series of researchers¹⁸ developed the key approach to media literacy education, with different distinctions and points of emphasis, out of a shared vision that strives to deepen the critical thinking of the students along with their media skills.

1. All media messages are constructed.
2. Media messages are constructed in economic, social, political, historical and aesthetic contexts.
3. The interpretation of media messages is the result of the interaction between the reader, the text and the culture.
4. Media messages use languages, methods and signs having codes and patterns that are connected to different genres and formats of the media.

¹⁷ First noted by media researcher Len Masterman, 1985.

¹⁸ Such as: Buckingham, 1998, 2010; Bazalgette, 1989; Kellner, 1995, 2003, Hobbs, 2011; Jenkins, 2005.

Theoretical Models for Media Criticism

5. Media representations play a major role in the way people understand social reality and participate in it.
6. Media messages reflect and shape the social behavior, positions and values of the individuals in it.

These key themes are a series of assumptions that underlie the pedagogical approach guiding the work with a critical model, first designed by the British researcher Carry Bazalgette (1989),¹⁹ under the auspices of the British Film Institute (BFI).

The model includes a number of main categories: the **producers** (the creators of the medium), the **media audiences**, **significant messages** and **representation of reality**. The use of categories helps students to pose critical questions (see the model of critical questions in its shorter and expanded version) during the analysis of media texts - whether print, visual, audio or digital - and it is suitable for all genres and formats, including the various kinds of interactive media expressions.

Model for critical questions - Short version

Key Perceptions (categories)	Critical questions
Authorship and audiences	1. Who made this message and what was their purpose?
Messages and meanings	2. What techniques are used in the text to gain the audience's attention?
	3. How will different target audiences understand the messages?
Representations and reality	4. What lifestyle, values and perspectives are represented in the text?
	5. What is not represented in the text?

Model for critical questions - Expanded version

It is recommended to exemplify the work method by using the model in the context of an event related to the conflict and to ask if the Israeli media are presenting a critical position in regard to the conflict.

In the courses that were given, we used the Israeli media's coverage of the flotilla to Gaza. It is recommended to use a recent news event.

The coverage of the Gaza flotilla followed the accepted pattern in the Israeli media: before - full justification for the military action without presenting any alternatives. Afterwards - harsh criticism of the decision-making process, relying on readers' short memories. [...]

"The naval commando is waiting," *Maariv* flexed its muscles in its weekend headline before the clash (May 28, 2010), and prepared the nation for a quick, powerful and elegant operation, and on May 31, 2010, also reported: "The flotilla is surrounded."

¹⁹ Bazalgette, C. (Ed.) (1989). *Primary media education: curriculum statement*. London, British Film Institute (BFI).

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In the coming days, *Maariv* consoled its readers... “The fiasco and the valor.” And the lead headline that was selected stated: “How an IDF’s elite was sent on a mission destined for failure,” as if it was *Maariv* that had warned all along of the anticipated failure and had not reported two days earlier on the “Commando’s finest hour,” and how it was going to take care of matters before you could say “Jack Robinson”.

By: Yizhar Be’er, Director-General of Keshev.

The approach presented by B. Michael in on *Media File* can also be discussed: <http://tinyurl.com/ce7fuo>

Discussion

How can one be a critical media consumer in the field of Israeli journalism?

1. Understanding the field of Israeli journalism - ownerships/political positions.
2. Active consumption - consuming news from more than one source - the various media/establishment and non-establishment (bloggers/Internet sites, etc.), the Israeli and foreign media, etc.

A critical analysis according to the Keshev model

The model proposed by Keshev seeks to examine media texts according to the following criteria:

1. Consistency between the headline and the text

Based on the understanding that the headline not only sums up the text, but also, and perhaps most importantly, frames the news item and marks its “correct” reading for the reader, it is important to examine the connection between the headline and the news item itself, which in many cases, appears coincidental at best and contains quite a few biases and distortions. The importance of the consistency between the headline and the content of the news item is heightened on the background of the fact that so many news consumers do no more than to merely scan the headlines of the news papers in order to remain informed about the news.

2. Location and prominence

The basic assumption of the producers and consumers of the media is that location and position are signs of importance and significance. That is the reason that media consumers perceive the news items that appear on the front page and those positioned at the beginning of a news broadcast on the radio and television as more important. Consequently, it is necessary to understand that the prominence given to a particular news item is the result of an editorial decision that largely determines the importance that we will attribute to the subject being covered.

3. Visual language

The editing work includes not only the verbal component but also the visual language that impacts the process of giving meaning to the text in the eyes of the media consumer. Here, it is important to examine:

- The choice of photographs and the impact of the message that the news item wants to transmit - in what way is the person being covered presented? Is distance or intimacy conveyed (a close-up or a far shot)? Is the event intensified or diminished?
- The choice of color for the headline and the way in which this choice serves the message - the accepted conventions in the Israeli media for the use of color in headlines should be presented.

4. Rhetoric and lexical choices

The disparities between the headline and the actual text of the news item that emerge can be expressed not only in the factual aspect, but also in rhetorical aspects. The choice of highly charged lexical items, images or metaphors for a headline can intensify or diminish the emotional effect that the article is trying to generate. Consequently, it is important to identify the lexical choices that the editor made and understand that these headlines paint the story in a particular color.

5. Factual framing

Most of the news items presented in the media offer assumptions, claims and predictions rather than factual information that is not in dispute among the parties involved in the issue being covered. Consequently, it is important to examine how the editors framed the information: Is the information presented as a fact, hypothesis, bias, claim, etc. This framing is important because it determines for the readers and viewers if they ought to believe the information or be skeptical of it.

6. Structuring of responsibility

News coverage often includes not only a factual description of the events, but also a determination of who is responsible for the events: Who caused things to happen the way they did? Frequently, the wording of a headline uses different means to determine responsibility, such as for example through the use of an active or passive form of a verb.

Sometimes, when there is some disagreement over the question of responsibility, the editors may decide to devote the headline to that very question. The materials that the reporters sent express conflicting positions regarding the question of responsibility, but the headlines tell an unambiguous tale.

It is recommended to present a current test case and analyze it using the two approaches described here.

Theoretical Models for Media Criticism

A possible example (the complete example can be found in the example database)

Headline: 21 arrested in Sheikh Jarakh: "It was a pogrom"

21 נעצרו בשייח' גראח: "עשו פה פוגרום"

מאת: איילה חנמאל ואופק עיני, מערכת וואלה! חדשות
יום שישי, 11 בדצמבר 2009, 22:09

פעיילי שמאל נעצרו במהלך הפגנה בשייח' גראח בירושלים שהפכה לעימותים עם כוחות הביטחון. שישה שוטרים נפצעו. מפגינה במקום: "אנשים הוכו, הטיחו את ראשם בניידת"

תגיות: ירושלים, שייח' גראח, הפגנות, אלימות משטרתית

21 מפגינים, רובם פעילי שמאל יהודים וחלקם ערבים, נעצרו אתמול (שישי) במהלך עימותים עם כוחות הביטחון בשכונת שייח' גראח בירושלים. בהפגנה נפצעו גם שישה שוטרים. המפגינים ניסו להיכנס לבתי היהודים בשכונה, אך נבלמו על ידי כוחות משטרה. בעקבות העימותים נעצרו מספר מפגינים, והמשטרה העבירה ליתר המפגינים הוראה להתפזר.



"מסתערבים רעולי פנים, נכנסו לקהל המפגינים, ועשו שם פוגרום תוך כדי שהם עוצרים עשרות מפגינים", ההפגנה בשייח' גראח (יותם רונן)

Possible questions for discussion:

1. How do the pictures selected to accompany the article frame the event?
2. What disparities are there between the headline and the text of the article?
3. Who created the text?
4. What are the sources of information noted in the text?
5. What perspective is emphasized in the text? Who are the figures at the center of the story?
6. To what extent can the text be perceived as reliable?

Study Unit Six - Alternative/Complementary and Activist Media Approaches

Goals:

- After having learned about criticism of the current method of reporting, the students will learn about alternative media approaches.

Structure - Critical analysis of a current text

- Presentation of alternative approaches - Peace Journalism, Common Ground Journalism.
- A discussion of media pluralism - new and alternative media.

Recommended reading

Bläsi, B. (2004). "Peace Journalism and the News Production Process". *Conflict & Communication Online*. 3 (1 & 2), www.cco.regener-online.de.

The example database contains a translation of this article into Hebrew.

Mann, R. (2003). "Peace Journalism." In *The Seventh Eye*, The Israel Democracy Institute, March, 2003, Vol. 37,

<http://www.the7eye.org.il/InternationalEye/Pages/article3720.aspx>

Rubinstein, D. (2009). *The Media is a Battlefield.*" In *The Seventh Eye*, The Israel Democracy Institute, October 4, 2009.

http://www.the7eye.org.il/articles/pages/041009_media_as_a_battlefield.aspx

Shinar, D. (2009). "On Peace and War Journalism." In *Common Sense: The Magazine for Strategic Thinking*, Netanya Academic College, No. 12.

Unit Plan

A critical analysis of a current text - sample text:

Headline: "Most Palestinians favor two states - but only as a temporary solution"

סקר: רוב הפלסטינים בעד שתי מדינות - אך כפתרון זמני בלבד

אבי ששנבום | 12:55 ב | 00:17 | 21.11.2010

קרוב לשני שלישים מהפלסטינים תומכים בפתרון שתי המדינות (ישראל ופלסטין), אולם בתנאי שבבוא הזמן יהפס למדינה אחת - פלסטין. כך עלה מסקר חדש שביצע מנן אמריקאי בראשות סטנלי גרנברג לארגון "הפחיקט הישראלי" (The Israel Project).

עם זאת, מהסקר עלה עוד כי 61% מהפלסטינים תומכים בניהול משא ומתן עם ישראל לפתרון קבע. 54% אף סבורים כי ניתן יהיה להגיע להסכם שלום עם ישראל. 58% טוענים כי זהו הזמן למאבק מזוין בישראל, לעומת 36% שאמרו כי זהו הזמן לדו-שיח.

80% מהנשאלים בסקר אמרו כי הם תומכים באופן עקיף בפתרון שתי המדינות. אולם בשאלה אחרת ציינו 60% כי הם בעד שתי מדינות - בדרך למדינה אחת (59% בגדה ו-63% בעזה). 30% בלבד תמכו בפתרון של שתי מדינות, ישראל ופלסטין, שישארו זו לצד זו.

59% כלל אינם בטוחים כי ישראל תמשיך להתקיים עוד 25 שנים מהיום כמדינה יהודית. רק 23% הביעו תמיכה ברעיון זכות קומה של ישראל כביטוי הלאומי של היהודים, לעומת 66% שהתנגדו לכך. באותו הסקר הביעו 50% תמיכה בהכרה במדינת ישראל כמדינה יהודית כדי להגיע לפתרון שתי המדינות. בסקר, 55% היו חובבי לראות את החוק במדינה הפלסטינית מושתת על השריעה - ההלכה האיסלאמית. רק 35% אמרו כי היו חובבי לראות בחוק האזרחי חוק המדינה.

יחד עם זאת, נכרות מסקר זה מגמות שעולות גם מסקרים אחרים באחרונה: הפופולריות של פתח ו"ר הראשות הפלסטינית, מחמד עבאס (אבו-מאזן) בעליה, בעוד זו של החמאס בירדה. הפער הוא כ-22% לטובת הפתח.

אם היו נערכות כעת בחיית לנשאות ובהן היו מתמודדים מחמד עבאס מול ראש ממשלת חמאס, איסמעיל הנייה, היה הראשון מנצח בפער של 13% - על פי הסקר. גם שיעור התמיכה באיראן ובנשיאה מחמד אחמדינז'אד אינם גבוהים.

Questions for discussion:

1. Who carried out the survey and who commissioned it?
2. When and where was it carried out?
3. Who was included in the sample - age, socioeconomic status, etc.?
4. How were the survey questions worded? - It is important to explain to the students that the findings of a survey are also open to interpretation. For example, the report states that 60% of those that responded said that they favored two states - but as a stage towards a one-state solution - but we are not given any information on the wording of the question. It is important to understand whether the wording pointed the respondents in the direction of an impractical dream as a solution, or to the proposed solution.
5. What is the relationship between the headline and the text of the article - Does the headline accurately reflect the findings of the survey?
6. How is the report worded? Here, there should be a discussion of the interpretive nature of the findings and the way they are presented as absolute facts.
7. In what other ways can the findings of the survey be interpreted?

Alternative approaches

Peace Journalism

The tendency of the Western media to cover wars and refrain from covering peace processes has been the target of harsh criticism at least since the Vietnam War, including in the Middle East conflict and the invasion of Iraq. In the 1970s, Norwegian scholar Johan Galtung, who is also an expert in international conflict resolution, came up with the notion of Peace Journalism.

The features of Peace Journalism

1. It is journalism that tries to explore the background for the creation of conflicts and their contexts in order to make them clearer and more transparent for the audience.
2. It is journalism that seeks reasons for and solutions to conflicts.
3. It is journalism that gives a platform to all the involved parties, that covers the suffering on both sides.
4. It is journalism that refrains from presenting a conflict as a battle between two sides in which there can only be one winning side and one losing side - it deconstructs the sides into smaller groups and identifies the goals of the subgroups.
5. It provides journalistic coverage that focuses on covering the human, social and cultural price of wars.
6. It provides coverage that refrains from representations that contain sharp and clear-cut distinctions between the sides so as to structure an inhuman image for one of the sides.
7. It provides coverage that offers creative ideas for resolving the conflict, making peace and maintaining understandings between the sides.
8. It provides coverage that tries to uncover the untruths and biases on both sides.
9. It directs attention and resources to covering peace stories and post-war stories, and not just events directly related to the conflict.

The advantages of Peace Journalism:

1. From a professional standpoint, Peace Journalism can grant the profession an aura of multilateralism, to provide background and context not as advocacy journalism or as “balcony journalism” that focuses on winners and losers, victories and defeats, but rather journalism with integrity that is fair and involved, that focuses on all sides of a conflict, its sources and victims.
2. From a social perspective, this is a concept that gives journalism and journalists a positive image of trying to make a desirable contribution on the background of the debate whether journalism ought to be “objective” or critical. This debate appears today to have lost relevance in wake of the unambiguously critical positions of media organizations and journalists on subjects such as crime, drugs, domestic violence, pedophilia or the consensus surrounding the view that it is impossible to maintain objectivity in the media.

Problems in the implementation of Peace Journalism

1. Research infrastructure - The research in the field of Peace Journalism is largely based on an ideological infrastructure, whereas the professional logic and work practices accepted in the field of journalism warrant less significant attention. Consequently, the principles of the approach should be adapted to the built-in and practical limitations that characterize the profession of journalism in the current age.
2. Structural aspects - One of the conditions for the existence of Peace Journalism is structured pluralism in media ownership. Under the current conditions of concentrated ownership of the media, it is difficult to expect media pluralism, although the new media do allow for the existence of alternative channels: civil journalism, blogs and channels based on other networks that make it possible to implement the basic principles of Peace Journalism.
3. Ethics - Under the current conditions of commercial ownership of the media, maintaining the rules of professional ethics is largely the role of the individual journalist. At the same time, in order to implement the principles of Peace Journalism, clear ethical rules are needed to determine the autonomous status of journalists. Without such ethical rules and without sanctions imposed upon those violating the rules, it is doubtful whether journalists can act in accordance with the rules of Peace Journalism in the face of groups with different interests and media owners.
4. Clarification of expectations - In an age when journalists and media organizations have become actors on the international stage, the boundaries of the field in which journalists are active should be clearly defined, and it should be made clear to journalists what their role is in the process of peace and war.

Critical claims against Peace Journalism

1. According to recent media studies, it is difficult to assume that Peace Journalism and the media as a whole have sufficient power to create a change.
2. Even if the media have a certain degree of international influence, it is not the role of the media to replace politicians, generals, and diplomats in making peace.
3. Peace Journalism undermines the professional integrity of journalists, confuses their role as nonpartisan producers of information and does not help to preserve journalistic values such as fairness and balance.
4. There is a built-in contradiction between the nature of peace processes and the professional demands in the media, some of which are anchored in the economic structure:
 - Peace processes are complex whereas the media require simplicity.
 - Peace processes require time to ripen whereas journalism requires immediate results.

Alternative/Complementary and Activist Media Approaches

- Peace processes excel in long, drawn-out discussions, whereas journalists need a clear-cut conflict.
- Many of the developments in peace processes occur behind the scenes whereas the media need overt information and action.

Common Ground Journalism

The approach taken by the international organization *Search for Common Ground* (SFCG) is to try to transform the commonly accepted way to cover conflicts. The accepted approach in the media to covering conflicts places the emphasis on the subjects under dispute, exploits contentious subjects for commercial needs and leaves the consumers of the media with the feeling that the extreme positions expressed in it represent the majority positions. In contrast to this approach, the methodology proposed by SFCG encourages the coverage of commonalities among the sides to the conflict, and seeks to undermine the prejudices and stereotypical positions that typify the coverage of the conflict, while actively seeking to uncover the possibility of finding a solution to the conflict (see in the example database: *Search for Common Ground and USAID Guide to Professional Journalism in Conflict Areas*, Jerusalem, 2011).

The approach according to which the media can take a positive role in creating a common basis for dialogue and the resolution of conflicts focuses on the following subjects:

1. Knowledge and education - By enabling the free flow of accurate and constructive knowledge, acting against mistaken perceptions, identifying the interests of the stakeholders in the conflict and helping to build a consensus between the sides, the media can advance a solution to the conflict. Thus, for example, the media should regularly cover the state of human rights and not only the points of conflict between the sides.
2. Mediation - The media can help to mediate between the sides in a conflict by fostering channels of media dialogue and creating a communication forum for ongoing dialogue, broad coverage of the negotiations between the sides and the attempts to create alternatives to a violent conflict and covering the aspirations of the citizenry for peace.
3. Oversight - One of the classic roles of the media is to be the “watchdog” of democracy. Consequently, the media need to oversee the actions of leaders and demand accountability for violations of human rights and previous agreements, in order to warn against possible escalations of conflict situations.

Discussion – Media pluralism

- How can alternative messages to those frequently heard in the traditional mainstream media be disseminated?
- In your opinion, do the new media have the ability to present alternative content?
- Have you ever been exposed to such content on the Internet? Where?

Video clips for presentation

Recent clips may be selected from sites such as:



Social television <http://www.tv.social.org.il/>



Latma - <http://www.latma.co.il/>

Background

This is how Israel Social Television presents itself:

Social Television is an organization for social change that acts as an independent media organization in order to advance a civic-critical perspective and undermine the hegemonic discourse in which the civic and social affairs are subordinate to security and economic ones. Social Television produces news items that advance the civic discourse in Israel in order to forge an alternative agenda on subjects of state, society, environment and culture, to replace the agenda of the commercial media that is managed based on considerations of ratings.

This is how the members of Latma present themselves (in English):

We are a group of journalists and writers who are fed up with the Israeli media. We are tired of screaming at the television screen, getting upset over biased newspaper articles. We are frustrated with the tiny group of journalists who are in control of the Israeli media, pretending they, and they only are the ones to be trusted. We have concluded that the only way to improve the public discourse is to expose the real face of journalism, and the news as a whole.

We decided to take action and formed "Latma" - an Israeli media criticism website that produces a weekly satirical news show.

Latma received the Israel Media Watch 2011 Prize, a prestigious award given to organizations that make courageous, meaningful, and quality contributions towards media criticism in Israel.

Latma was chosen by an online poll involving over 4,000 voters. According to Israel Media Watch, Latma brings balance to the left-wing bias of mainstream Israeli satire.

And in Hebrew

We are a group of journalists and writers who are fed up with the Israeli media. As media consumers, we are tired of screaming at the television screen, radio and daily newspapers about how idiotic and distorted they are. We are sick of seeing the media crowd talking about how smart and beautiful they are and about how we ought to trust them because they're so smart and beautiful.

This is especially so in view of the fact that it's difficult to recall even a single case when the media as a group or major journalists as individuals were right about anything important.

Every day, when we review the world media we come across dozens of items filled with information important to the Israeli public that is not brought to its attention. In Israel, on the other hand, we read, watch and hear stories every day about Israeli "celebs" whose only claim to fame is the fact that they are friends of journalists.

We have concluded that the only way to improve the public discourse in Israel and raise it to the level worthy of the Israeli public is to show the true face of the news and media system as a whole.

In our opinion, they're clowns. We have taken upon ourselves to show you just how much.

Discussion

1. Authorship/Audience

- What is the perception (or agenda) that guides the authors of the criticism? What is their aim?
- Who is the criticism directed at?
- Is the criticism important to me as a consumer of critical media? Why?

2. Messages and meanings

- What is the main claim presented in the excerpt?
- What main ideas/values are transmitted via the criticism?
- What techniques are used in the criticism?
- What is the criticism based on?

3. Personal position

- In your opinion, is the criticism expressed by the writers on the site reliable? Why or why not?

Study Unit Seven - The Internet and New Media - Taking the Battle Online

Dr. Tal Pavel

Structure

- The Internet as a means of public diplomacy.
- The third Palestinian intifada.
- The BDS phenomenon.

Unit Plan

The Internet is characterized by the transparency and availability of information. The Internet makes it possible today to obtain, create and transmit information at any time to any place and to end users of many different types. This is true in all states and societies, but especially in the more centralist ones that lack individual freedoms and freedom of speech, as is the case for many of the countries in the Middle East.

In our region, the Internet represents a means of expression for social and political protesters, as we saw during the events of the “Arab Spring” in 2011, but it also provides a platform for daily protests to express a wide variety of oppressed Middle Eastern voices, as well as an available and immediate medium as part of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

This conflict touches on different content worlds outside our region too. The following section will examine a number of areas of interest in which the Internet and social networks play a role in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. This will be done to enable access to online sources of information identified with the opposite side in this conflict, in order to be exposed to a different and conflicting narrative from the Israeli one, and thereby to allow us as consumers to make informed, comprehensive, balanced and critical use of the online media as a whole and especially in the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

The Internet as a means of public diplomacy; the Palestinian narrative

The Internet and social networks include widespread activity to present the Palestinian narrative in the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. This is done by means of numerous websites that provide a great deal of information from the Palestinian perspective.²⁰ Some of the sites are general and some are devoted to specific areas, such as the Nakba,²¹ the Arabs of 1948,²² the Palestinian refugees,²³ the occupation,²⁴ etc. This is in addition to a great deal of activity on Facebook,²⁵ Twitter²⁶ and other social networks.

²⁰ <http://www.palestineremembered.com>

²¹ <http://www.badil.org/Publications/badil-nakba-60-info-packet>

²² <http://www.arabs48.com>

²³ <http://prrn.mcgill.ca>, <http://www.badil.org>

²⁴ <http://www.israeli-occupation.org>

²⁵ <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Palestine-Remembered/114529541894352>,

²⁶ <http://twitter.com/#!/AMPalestine>, <http://twitter.com/#!/palestinelegal>

This online activity also includes a large number of official Palestinian governmental websites and media sites. The online Palestinian activity is very extensive,²⁷ professionally executed and frequent, widely circulated and mostly up to date.

Organizations, research, aid and monitoring

Many organizations that engage in aiding and monitoring the situation of the Palestinians in the Palestinian Authority and Gaza have Internet sites. Among these are international, Palestinian and even Israeli organizations, and they are active in different content worlds, varied sectors and with different objectives.

For example:

Human rights:

- Human Rights Watch, which also works with “Israelis and the Occupied Territories”²⁸
- The Palestinian Center for Human Rights (PCHR)²⁹
- The Palestinian Human Rights Monitoring Group (PHRMG)³⁰

Women:

- The Israeli women’s organization Women in Black³¹
- Coalition of Women for Peace³² - which is active in various social networks

Additional organizations³³

Research institutes:

- Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research, (PSR)³⁴ which is active in Ramallah
- Columbia University - Center For Palestine Studies³⁵
- The Palestinian Center for Research and Cultural Dialogue (PCRD)³⁶
- Palestinian American Research Center³⁷
- List of Palestinian universities³⁸
- The Land Research Center (LRC)³⁹

²⁷ <http://www.palestineremembered.com/Links.html>

²⁸ <http://www.hrw.org/middle-eastn-africa/israel-and-occupied-territories>

²⁹ <http://www.pchrgaza.org>

³⁰ <http://www.phrmg.org>

³¹ <http://www.womeninblack.org/en/vigil>

³² <http://coalition.s482.sureserver.com>

³³ <http://www.watcpal.org/english/display.asp?DocID=26>

³⁴ <http://www.pcpsr.org>

³⁵ <http://www.columbia.edu/cu/palestine>

³⁶ <http://www.pcrd-pal.org>

³⁷ <http://caorc.org/centers/parc.htm>

³⁸ http://www.euncp.ps/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=71&Itemid=72

³⁹ <http://www.lrcj.org>

NGOs⁴⁰

Additional sources of information⁴¹

The results are well known. This is in contrast to the “third Palestinian intifada,” which was affirmed by hundreds of thousands on line, but nevertheless did not happen on the ground.

The BDS (Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions) phenomenon

Throughout the world, there are numerous initiatives to boycott and impose sanctions on Israel as part of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. A variety of organizations and initiatives from dozens of countries around the world are involved. The online activity in this area is quite substantial:

There are organizations that lie at the core of the BDS activity against Israel.⁴² Their entire essence and all their activities are aimed at creating boycott campaigns against Israel, its products, people and activities. In the second circle are organizations such as the Muslim student organizations, labor organizations throughout the world and Muslim social organizations that among their other activities also promote BDS campaigns.⁴³ Finally, in the broadest circle are sites that don't directly deal with this subject but that mention BDS activities as part of the news items on their site or who link to outside events or sites that focus on BDS.

These boycott campaigns can target a product,⁴⁴ a social or economic sector (whether it has its source in the territories or not) or a personality, or it can be a sweeping boycott of all Israel's products and activities.

This activity is expressed not only on various types of sites, but also in a wide variety of online activities on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and the other social networks.⁴⁵

The online activities provide a great deal of information, invite people to online and physical events, call on people to take action in this area, organize online petitions,⁴⁶ etc. The Internet clearly offers fertile ground for this type of anti-Israel activity.

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⁴⁰ http://www.webgaza.net/palestine/ngo_profiles

⁴¹ http://www.columbia.edu/cu/lweb/indiv/mideast/cuvm/Palestine_.html

⁴² <http://www.bdsmovement.net>, <http://www.bigcampaign.org>

⁴³ <http://www.palestinecampaign.org> - This is one of the most central organizations dealing with this area and it has an extensive network of physical and virtual branches in the U.K.

⁴⁴ <https://www.facebook.com/KCLAP.Ahava.Campaign>

⁴⁵ <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Boycott-Divestment-and-Sanctions-BDS-Movement/115083011869901>

⁴⁶ <http://www.gopetition.com/petitions/petition-against-king-s-college-london-involvement-with.html>

The Internet as an Initiator of Change in the Arab Public Sphere

Suggested exercises

Dr. Amira Halperin

The significant growth of the Internet, which began in the 1990s and greatly expanded in the past decade, makes it possible to consume news critically, in other words, to read news on multiple websites, compare the messages and draw informed conclusions. Moreover, the development of news sites and social media sites by groups and individuals who are not members of the establishment media make it possible to produce content without being dependent on or connected to central media outlets. Like in many other places, the audience of Palestinian consumers uses hundreds of Internet sites, social media sites, blogs and chat forums to consume news. The centrality of news for this audience, like for others, crosses the boundaries of age, profession and economic class.

The audience of consumers is not passive in its news consumption. In other words, it actively chooses and produces content itself. Media consumers also use the Internet to advance political needs. The Internet enables the sides to a conflict to disseminate their messages to very wide audiences throughout the world. The use of the Internet symbolized a revolution for the sides to the conflict in two ways: 1. In the technical sense, there is a transition from the use of traditional media to the use of modern digital media. 2. The Internet has an influence on the level of the message - it empowers the audience, especially the one considered "the weaker side" in conflicts (for example, the Palestinian side).

Covering the conflict in the international media

Some claim that there is a bias in the media coverage of the conflict, and that there are two main points that should be related to when assessing the coverage of the conflict: Visuals and the choice of terminology.

Visuals - Because news events related to the conflict are broadcast on television and Internet news sites, pictures can determine for the audience who the "good guys" and the who the "bad guys" are. News editions, especially news bulletins and flashes, omit the background and context of the conflict and consequently pictures of an injured child or the site of a terror attack impact international public opinion. The "war of pictures" is a significant factor in the efforts to influence public opinion. A well-known example of this is the documentation of the shooting of a Palestinian child, Mohammed A-Dura, during the early days of the second intifada in 2000. Various interpretations have been given to this media event, with the Palestinians claiming Israeli violence, while the Israeli side claims Palestinian propaganda. The shooting of the Palestinian child is an excellent example of the Palestinians' ability to use the Internet for political purposes. A Palestinian photographer filmed the child as his father tried to shield him. This media event remains imprinted on the minds of many media consumers and still occupies Arab and Western media organizations. A few years after the event, a French court determined that the documentation of the event had been distorted. Following its decision, in April 2011, an Israeli orthopedic surgeon, Dr. Yehuda David, was convicted of slandering Mohammad A-Dura's father, whom he had treated in the past. The conviction involved the doctor's statement that A-Dura had not died as a result of being shot by IDF soldiers.

According to Khoury-Machool, the immediacy of publication on the Internet revealed to the Palestinians the potential of the new media to undermine the hegemony of the biased establishment media (Khoury-Machool, 2007:25). The participation of the Palestinian audience in the online media

The Internet and New Media - Taking the Battle Online

discourse, as it receives and produces news, does not necessarily lead to Palestinian influence on the establishment media; however, the Palestinians are definitely involved in expanding the official and unofficial local and international networks by means of the new media.

Choice of terminology - Language aimed at evoking emotions (examples will follow)

Exercises

1. Personal interviews with media consumers - The aim is to learn about the behavior of the participants and interpret the reality being studied. The students will hold in-depth interviews with at least ten participants coming from different socioeconomic backgrounds and holding different political views, with ages ranging 20-60. They can include the research method of observation too, in other words, to participate and conduct observations of what actually happens at social gatherings and events of the community being studied. This will enable them to gain a good level of familiarity with the community being studied and the principal political and social issues that impact it.

The questions to be posed to the participants can be open questions (with the answers to be formulated by the participants) divided into two rounds of questions. The first round will include personal questions and the second, questions that relate to the participants' media-consumption habits. The aim in using personal questions is twofold: first, to create a friendly relationship with the participants; second, to gain a comprehensive understanding of the participants' media-consumption habits. The aim of creating a friendly relationship is to create a good "first round," that will enable the researchers to approach the participants a second time with additional questions. From the perspective of Palestinian participants, for example, discussion of their personal stories is a natural aspect of their culture, especially in the context of their historical narrative.

Personal questions:

- Full name
- Place of residence
- Vocation/profession
- Age
- Family status
- Political affiliation

Questions related to media consumption:

- What is the main media channel that you use for news?
- On which news sites do you look for information on the subject of the conflict?
- Which news programs do you watch on television?
- What are the names of the newspapers you read?
- What is the frequency of your news consumption?
- What is the degree of your interest in the coverage of the conflict?

The role of the researcher is to listen to the participants' responses and to understand repeated habits of media use that cross boundaries of age, gender, profession and socioeconomic standing. If most of the participants give a similar answer to particular questions, conclusions may be drawn regarding their media-consumption habits and patterns identified in their behavior. In addition, conclusions may be drawn beyond their media-consumption habits, for example regarding questions of identity.

The interview should be held in the participants' natural surroundings: the workplace, place of

residence or the places where they hold social events and gatherings. The personal-interview method will help the researchers create a context for the interviews. Because the participants are in their natural surroundings, it will be possible to gain an understanding of their daily lives, political views, socioeconomic standing, etc. Moreover, the personal-interview method will enable the researchers to observe Internet sites or newspapers together with the participants in the survey and learn about their media-consumption habits from them directly rather than in a mediated fashion.

2. Analysis of news content - Choose a newspaper or news site and analyze the articles on the conflict over a period of time to be decided upon by the students based on criteria such as:
 - The number of times disturbing graphic images appear alongside one or another side to the conflict.
 - The number of times acts of violence carried out by the Israeli side are described compared to the number of times acts of violence carried out by the Palestinian side are described.
 - The number of times words or phrases aimed at evoking “emotion” are used (for example, the use of the term “Israeli Occupation Army” when referring to the IDF is used on the Palestinian news site Palestine Info).

When using these two research methods, personal interviews and content analysis, the news should be analyzed during routine times, as well as during “major events” and developing occurrences. A “major event” includes an election, large-scale violent events and the coverage of negotiations between the different sides.

When holding a personal interview, a comparison should be made between the consumption of news during times of breaking news to its consumption during normal times, while relating to questions such as:

- How frequent is the consumption of news during normal times compared to at times of crisis?
- Are the same media and the media sources used at normal times and at times of crisis?
- Are there other, unofficial, news sources that participants use to learn about news events?

When analyzing content - a “major” news event should be selected to comparatively analyze the coverage of the same event on different media channels in regard to the following criteria:

- Visuals.
- Use of language - emotional or rational.
- Placement and prominence.
- Comparison between choice of interviewees.
- Who is transmitting the message and what is his political affiliation (including publications in which the authorship of the content is unknown)?

Example 1 - Operation Cast Lead - December 2008

The articles and features on Operation Cast Lead should be read while relating to questions such as:

- **The choice of words and use of the headline** - Examine whether the aim of the word choice is to transmit a message that takes a positive or negative stance.
For example, the Hamas television network Al-Aqsa uses the word “holocaust” in its coverage; *Haaretz* describes what the IDF did as “war crimes”; *Israel Hayom*, a rightist newspaper, compared to *Haaretz*, which is left leaning - What are the headlines and terms used?
- **Visuals** - What pictures were chosen? (examples of pictures used in the coverage of Operation Cast Lead in certain newspapers can be found in the Keshev *Media-Monitoring Project: An Israeli-Palestinian Guide to a Critical Reading of the Media*, 2009, p. 33).
- **Consistency between headline and text** - Do the headlines accurately reflect the content of the text?

Example 2 - Coverage of the terror attacks on the Sinai border - August 2011

- **Location and prominence** - Where is the article on the subject of the coverage of the terror attacks located - on the front page or at the beginning of the news broadcast, or is its location less central? What is the degree of its prominence?
- **Choice of words and use of headlines** - What phrases are used - e.g. “terror attack,” “bombing action?”
- **Factual framing** - Is the information presented as a fact, hypothesis, claim, etc.?
An example of factual framing: the coverage of the killing of the eight members of the Ghaliya family in an explosion on a Gaza beach on June 9, 2006. The Israeli media gave prominence in headlines to claims that exonerated the IDF of responsibility for the explosion, and framed them as facts not in dispute (for further reading, see Keshev report, 2009, p. 29).

Example 3 - The release of abducted soldier Gilad Shalit - October 2011

- The **location and prominence** of the news related to the negotiations for the soldier’s release should be examined.
- Examine the **headlines** - What was the main news item on the day of Gilad Shalit’s release, as can be learned in Kholod Masalha & Amal Jamal, *The Arab Media Needs Arab Reporters*, Ilam Media Center for Arab Palestinians in Israel, 2011.
- The headline.
- **Structuring responsibility** - See who is credited with the success of the negotiations to release Gilad Shalit and who with failure due to the lengthy period of time until his release.

Possible reading: *The Seventh Eye* - a critical survey of the daily press and of the Arab press.

Recommended Reading

The narrative of the Nakba and of Independence Day according to the book by Adwan and Bar-On (2008) - See in the example database:

Masalha, K. & Jamal A. (2011). *The Arab Media Needs Arab Reporters*. Ilam Media Center for Arab Palestinians in Israel.

Reinhardt, T. (2010). *It Says It in the Newspaper - Language, Media and Ideology*. Haifa: Pardes.

Kabha, M. (2006). "The Arab press in Israel 1948-2006, as an apparatus in the identity-building process". *Herzog Institute of Communications*. No. 5 (December 2006). Tel Aviv: Tel-Aviv University.

Khoury-Machool, M. (2007). "Palestinian Youth and Political Activism: the Emerging Internet Culture and New Modes of Resistance". *Policy Futures in Education*. Vol. 5, No. 1, pp. 17-36.

Israeli websites

<http://www.mfa.gov.il/mfaheb>

http://www.tau.ac.il/institutes/diplomacy/diplomatia_book.pdf

<http://www.memri.org.il>

<http://keshev.org.il/Search/newest-first.html?searchphrase=any&searchword=%D7%93%D7%9E%D7%95%D7%A7%D7%A8%D7%98%D7%99%D7%94&submit=Search>

Palestinian media

Political sites

1. Hamas - www.palestine-info.co.uk/en
2. Fatah - www.alwatanvoice.com

Sites not identified politically

Electronic Intifada - <http://electronicintifada.net/>

Palestinian news agencies

1. Maan News Agency - www.maannews.net/en
2. Wafa - <http://english.wafa.ps/>

Study Unit Eight - Final Project

Project goal

To gain experience in producing a media text that reflects an active critical approach with respect to the media representation given to events related to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Work method

The work will be carried out in groups of 4-5 students. The groups will be made up of students of communication and scholars from other study tracks participating in the course, and the division of roles among them will be decided in advance.

Project-preparation process

Each group will choose a subject related to the conflict the coverage of which it would like to examine and present in a different manner from the way it is presented in the mainstream media channels. These are some of the options from which students can choose:

1. Collect six articles on the same subject, issue or event from different sources, critically analyze the way the subject was covered (based on the critical media literacy model), propose an alternative and produce it as a media text in a format to be chosen by the group (blog, YouTube clip, online article, radio feature to be broadcast on Radio Netanya, etc.)
2. Collect six articles on a particular subject in the same newspaper/television channel/Internet site and analyze the texts based on the key perceptions of critical media literacy; prepare a lexicon of terms, including proposals for terms accepted by the whole group as “balanced” (which terminology, images are used about Jews, about Palestinians), what type of information is presented, what information is not presented, who is quoted, what are the sources of information, framing, prominence, agenda, etc.) and offer an alternative.
3. Prepare a panel that will deal with an issue related to the conflict presenting the different positions. The panel can be videotaped or described in an article.
4. Follow a developing event on one or more media channels (print or electronic press, television, Internet) for a week to two weeks, and analyze how it develops from the point of view of the coverage: its location and position in the media, the media framing, prominence in coverage, criticism, how the coverage changes over time, and at the end, propose criteria to critically analyze and assess the media coverage.

Final project assessment criteria

1. Was a claim presented, and if so, on what was it based (types of sources, quotes and references) and how was it reflected in the project?
2. To what extent does the project reflect a critical approach with respect to the media as a whole and to the representation of the conflict?
 - The critical analysis of the text (in accordance with the model studied in class).
 - The use of relevant terminology from the literature.
 - The ability to take a personal/group stand.
3. What is the extent of the originality as it is reflected in the components of the project (the text that was examined, issue, manner of presentation, presentation format and alternative text)?
4. To what extent did the members of the group exhibit involvement, knowledge and interest in the project?

Appendices

Part 1 - Suggestions for exercises in the classroom

Exercise 1

1. Read on the course's website *Side by Side: Competing Histories of Israel/Palestine* by Dan Bar-On and Sami Adwan.
2. Identify the similarities in the narratives of the 1948 War of Independence vs. the Nakba.
3. Present a skeptical and critical position in regard to the different narratives and take an integrative approach mainly to the points of disagreement.

Exercise 2

Watch the clip in the link dealing with the role of the Jewish state vis-à-vis the IDF Spokesperson and answer the following questions briefly and to the point:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1eT3D-sGu04&feature=related>

1. What is the perspective of the Peace Now representative compared to that of the military correspondent, and on what does each base his claims?
2. As critical media consumers, with which of the two do you tend more to agree, and why?
3. From what you have read and heard in the lessons so far, what practical implications and meanings for the reader as an audience are there in the relationship between the journalists (media) and the IDF Spokesperson, as depicted in these excerpts. Explain.

Exercise 3 (group exercise): Criticizing the criticism

Based on the key questions model of critical media literacy:

This site <http://www.presspectiva.org.il/> criticizes the media reporting of a number of events in the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Choose one of them and briefly present the criticism based on the following guidelines:

The event:

1. Authorship/audience
 - What is the perception (or agenda) guiding the authors of the criticism? What is their goal?
 - To whom is the criticism addressed and is it important to me as an audience and why?
2. Messages and meanings
 - What main ideas/values are transmitted in the criticism?
 - What techniques are used in the criticism?
 - What is the criticism based on?
3. Representation of reality
 - Read the original text (from the online press) of the media report and note:
 - What did the media give prominence to in the reporting of the event? What was not presented in it?
 - What sources was the media report based on?

4. Personal positions

- Is the criticism presented on the site reliable in your opinion? Why?
- Do you agree with the criticism? Do you think there is room to add to it? Explain.

Exercise 4 (group exercise)

Below are four links to alternative media that cover the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Each of them has a home page:

Enter the home page of each of them, watch each of the four clips that are marked, and then answer the following questions:

1. What is the perspective (media framing) that is presented in each of them in the context of the coverage and reporting on the conflict? Explain your answer.
2. Is the media framing different from that presented in the mainstream media? Explain and provide details.

1. Social Television on *London & Kirschenbaum*:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_cPDTgFu2vg&feature=related

2. Yizhar Be'er of Keshev interviewed on Social Television:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZFh9FprkBjo>

3. Latma:

<http://www.latma.co.il/>

An interview with the editor of Latma's *Tribal Update* as independent media:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VyAB7KrzksA>

4. Common Ground News Service on the Middle East:

<http://www.commongroundnews.org/video.php?lan=he>

Part 2 – Sources

Possible films for viewing:

http://www.internationalpeaceandconflict.org/video/video/show?id=780588:Video:475497&xgs=1&xg_source=msg_share_video

