Chapter 11

Discussion Questions.

1. There is a difference in what and how topics are covered on liberal (e.g., MSNBC) versus conservative (FOX News) television news outlets. Have students watch, take notes, and compare these news reports for a specific period of time. Also, have the students come up with brief summaries of their findings to report in class.
2. Should the government regulate what is broadcast on television or should regulation be a responsibility of each individual consumer? For example, should the government state that nudity is inappropriate during Prime Time and therefore restrict it or should individuals say to themselves “If I don’t like what’s on, or I don’t think my children should be watching something, it is my responsibility to turn off the television?”
3. Is the media truly doing its job when important stories go unexamined, unreported or are marginalized? For example, before the start of the Iraq war, the Bush Administration was seldom questioned about their intelligence and abilities to prove Saddam Hussein had weapons of mass destruction. Discuss how such emissions can affect a society such as the U.S.
4. It appears that local television media outlets have become so desperate for ratings, and the hugh revenue that follows, they sensationalize issues (e.g., “Are restaurants trying to kill you – tune in at 5:30 and we will let you know,” “Will one of the neighborhood kids break in and rob you – tune in at 6:00 and we will tell you how to defend yourself”) to make you believe that they have the answer to solving these emanate threats to your life. Is this appropriate news broadcasting?
5. Ask the students to discuss how their lives would change if the internet disappeared today. What would they miss the most? Why?
6. News outlets often state that they have “breaking news” to report when in fact it often a ploy to get viewers to tune in to their channel. Discuss with the class how often they pay attention to news stations when they state they have “breaking news”. Many people may choose to ignore these alerts. Is this an issue that should be addressed by the news outlets?