**Media Journal (Paper #2) Response Paragraphs:**

**Critical/Analytical Response Strategies**

Every entry in your Media Journal should focus on one piece of journalism and consist of at least one full summary paragraph and at least one full paragraph of response. For successful responses, strong paragraph structure will be crucial, so set up a clear overall point for the paragraph in your topic sentence, and stay on that topic in your paragraph development toward a clear concluding sentence. (Do not just stack unorganized observations, because that’s just building a simple list, not a fully developed paragraph.)

Consider the following strategies toward meaningful critical analysis of the journalism pieces you choose:

* **Straightforward journalism analysis** – is it good or bad journalism, and can you explain why?
* **News style and structure analysis** – hard news (on the most current, breaking topics) employs an opening sentence/paragraph known as a lede (to identify the whole story) and inverted pyramid structure to organize the story from most important to least important details. Can you identify and critique this style and structure?
* **Rhetorical analysis** – what are the author’s writing goals (beyond what’s obvious), how does the author pursue those goals rhetorically, and is the author successful?
* **Visual/graphics analysis** – what key visuals are employed, and are they successful, distracting, appropriate, ethical, etc.?
* **Sourcing analysis** – does the piece of journalism cover the story with thorough, balanced, and appropriate use of relevant sources (eyewitnesses, documents, experts, authorities, etc.)? NOTE: Be very careful about blaming a story for being too short, because most news briefs are meant to be brief – for example, the Chicago Sun-Times usually does not cover international news in depth and uses tiny Associated Press briefs to cover stories outside of its coverage/readership area.
* **Ethics** – is the story an example of good, ethical journalism that enhances our democratic society with information people can use to expand their knowledge of the world and exercise freedom? Or is it something else?
* **News value** – given your source (newspaper, web site, TV show, etc.) and its audience/goals, do you think it covered the story adequately, insufficiently, or too much? (Remember to be careful about blaming a news brief for being too brief.)
* **Audience response** – consider how a mixed audience might receive the story/piece you’re observing and if the journalism is successful in appealing to that audience.

Your teacher provides this list to help guide you in critical analysis of the news media, so feel free to develop your own mix of strategies from this list toward building well organized response paragraphs. You may also use these strategies in your overall conclusion to the Media Journal (two paragraphs) in which you can compare/contrast the various sources you’ve used.