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Issue 1. Are Family Values Shaped by the Mass Media? 2

YES: Leigh H. Edwards, from “Reality TV and the American Family,” in Julie Anne Taddeo and Ken Devorak, eds., *The Tube Has Spoken* (The University Press of Kentucky, 2010), pp. 123–141 5

NO: Karen Sternheimer, from “Hollywood Doesn’t Threaten Family Values,” *Contexts* (2008) 15

Associate Professor Leigh H. Edwards examines how families are portrayed in television and discusses how certain narrative tropes, trends, and genres present us with real family relationships representative of American society and culture. She raises the important point that reality television in particular presents viewers with real conflicts to which many families can relate, because the programs portray real cultural problems that have no easy answers. She concludes her argument with an assessment that public debates about family and marriage often frame the content of the families we see on television. Sociology Professor Karen Sternheimer cites public controversies about the real lives and on-screen portrayals of families by celebrities who are often criticized for contributing to demeaning family values in popular culture. She argues that these celebrities and media figures are not to be blamed for contributing to moral chaos, when the real-world economy provides a more powerful argument for examining families, values, and problems in American life.

Issue 2. Do Media Unite the Population in Times of Crisis? 23

YES: Marcia Landy, from “‘America Under Attack’: Pearl Harbor, 9/11, and History in the Media,” in Wheeler Winston Dixon, ed., *Film and Television After 9/11* (Southern Illinois University Press, 2004), pp. 79–100 26

NO: Michael Eric Dyson, from “Unnatural Disasters: Race and Poverty,” *Come Hell or High Water: Hurricane Katrina and the Color of Disaster* (Basic Books, 2006) 37

Film critic and professor Marcia Landy examines two major events in U.S. history: the attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941 and the events of 9/11/2001 to examine how each event has been portrayed in media and has reinforced some values that include patriotism, destiny, and victimhood. She examines representative issues from different forms of media to show that all forms of media contribute to reinforcing ideas about Americanism and

American character. Noted social critic Michael Eric Dyson reflects on the August 2005 Hurricane Katrina disaster, which flooded most of the city of New Orleans and caused massive social upheaval as 90 percent of the residents of Louisiana and surrounding areas were asked to evacuate to avoid the storm. During the Katrina disaster, local media outlets were destroyed, so media elsewhere told the story of Katrina's impact. According to Dyson, the story told relied on traditional stereotypes of Blacks, rather than telling the real story of poverty, which so severely affected the lives and deaths of so many people of color.

Issue 3. Do Media Distort Representations of Islam and Arab Cultures? 48

YES: **Wajahat Ali, Eli Clifton, Matthew Duss, Lee Fang, Scott Keyes, and Faiz Shakir**, from "Fear, Inc.: The Roots of the Islamophobia Network in America," Center for American Progress (August 2011), selections from 1–152 51

NO: **Gal Beckerman**, from "The New Arab Conversation," *Columbia Journalism Review* (January/February, 2007) 59

Wajahat Ali, Eli Clifton, Matthew Duss, Lee Fang, Scott Keyes, and Faiz Shakir discuss in *Fear, Inc.*, a special report from the Center for American Progress, how the Muslim religion is among the most maligned stereotypes in popular culture, and how these images have fueled misperceptions about the Arab world. It explores how media have been an echo chamber for misinformation created by well-funded groups dedicated to spreading fear and misinformation. These images influence politicians and citizens and contribute to public opinion. Journalist Gal Beckerman discusses how Arab bloggers from the Middle East are challenging popular stereotypes of Arab and Middle Eastern cultures. Because these bloggers are writing about their lives, the global public can read about their situations and understand them as individuals, rather than racial or ethnic group members.

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Issue 4. Do Media Cause Individuals to Develop Negative Body Images? 70

YES: **Shari L. Dworkin and Faye Linda Wachs**, from "What Kinds of Subjects and Objects? Gender, Consumer Culture, and Convergence," in *Body Panic: Gender, Health, and the Selling of Fitness* (New York University, 2009) 73

NO: **Michael P. Levine and Sarah K. Murnen**, from "Everybody Knows That Mass Media Are/Are Not [*pick one*] a Cause of Eating Disorders: A Critical Review of Evidence for a Causal Link Between Media, Negative Body Image, and Disordered Eating in Females," *Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology* (2009) 83

Shari Dworkin and Faye Wachs discuss the results of their content analysis of health magazine ads and find that the ads tell men and women that a healthy body is attainable if they buy the products and pamper themselves. Fat becomes something to be feared, and grooming practices and fashion are "sold" as imperatives for both men and women. Michael Levine and Sarah Murnen also investigate magazine ads, but find the

assumption that media cause eating disorders to be too limited. Instead, they cite a wide range of social, behavioral, and cultural issues over time to understand the complex conditions under which girls begin to adopt negative body issues that result in eating disorders.

Issue 5. Do Video Games Encourage Violent Behavior? 95

YES: Craig A. Anderson, from “FAQs on Violent Video Games and Other Media Violence,” www.CraigAnderson.org 98

NO: Henry Jenkins, from “Reality Bytes: Eight Myths About Video Games Debunked,” www.pbs.org/kcts/videogamerevolution/impact/myths.html 107

Craig A. Anderson is an expert on the effect of violence in television and film. Based on extensive research, he holds the position that video games prompt young people toward even more aggression and violence than do other media content. Henry Jenkins tackles a broad array of misconceptions about the place and impact of video games on society. He argues that the primary audience is not children, that violence is not increasing in society, and that concerns about isolation, desensitization, and violence are overblown.

Issue 6. Is Advertising Good for Society? 113

YES: John E. Calfee, from “How Advertising Informs to Our Benefit,” *Consumers’ Research* (April 1998) 117

NO: Dinyar Godrej, from “How the Ad Industry Pins Us Down,” *New Internationalist* (September 2006) 127

John Calfee takes the position that advertising is very useful to people and that the information that advertising imparts helps consumers make better decisions. He maintains that the benefits of advertising far outweigh the negative criticisms. Dinyar Godrej makes the claim that advertising doesn’t really tell us anything new about products, but instead, it acts upon our emotions to create anxiety if we don’t buy products. The result, then, is a culture in which we consume more than we need to, and still feel bad about ourselves. This type of consumer culture then permeates our lifestyles.

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Issue 7. Does Fake News Mislead the Public? 136

YES: Julia R. Fox, Glory Koloen, and Volkan Sahin, from “No Joke: A Comparison of Substance in *The Daily Show with Jon Stewart* and Broadcast Network Television Coverage of the 2004 Presidential Election Campaign,” *Journal of Broadcasting and Electronic Media* (June 2007) 139

NO: Barry A. Hollander, from “Late-Night Learning: Do Entertainment Programs Increase Political Campaign Knowledge for Young Viewers?” *Journal of Broadcasting and Electronic Media* (December 2005) 154

This study examined political coverage of the first presidential debate and the political convention on *The Daily Show* and on network nightly newscasts. The study found the network coverage to be more hype than

substance, and *The Daily Show* to be more humor than substance. The amount of substantive information between the two newscasts was about the same for both the story and for the entire half-hour program. Barry Hollander examined learning from comedy and late-night programs. National survey data were used to examine whether exposure to comedy and late-night programs actually informs viewers, focusing on recall and recognition. Some support is found for the prediction that the consumption of such programs is more associated with recognition of information than with actual recall.

Issue 8. Will Evolving Forms of Journalism Be an Improvement? 168

YES: **The Economist**, from “The People Formerly Known as the Audience,” *The Economist* (vol. 399:8741, pp. 9–12, July 7, 2011) 172

NO: **Alex Jones**, from “The Iron Core,” in *Losing the News* (Oxford University Press, 2009) 178

In a special report *The Economist* studies “The People Formerly Known as the Audience” to argue that social media allow a wider range of people to take part in gathering, filtering, and distributing the news. A torrent of information is being posted on the Internet, creating a role for people—not limited to journalists, to evaluate, verify, and create meaning. Alex Jones describes the iron core of journalism as fact-based accountability journalism, an expensive, intensive search for information that holds those with power accountable. Opinion journalism, quasi-news programs, and even entertainment media rely on the iron core for their substance. Whether journalism that produces the iron core will continue to function as is needed is his concern.

Issue 9. Do Social Media Encourage Revolution? 190

YES: **Clay Shirky**, from “The Political Power of Social Media,” *Foreign Affairs* (vol. 90, p. 1, January/February 2011) 194

NO: **Malcolm Gladwell**, from “Small Change: Why the Revolution Will Not Be Tweeted,” *The New Yorker* (vol. 86, p. 30, October 2010) 204

Clay Shirky considers the ways social media have been used to organize protest and promote social change. He writes about short- and long-term consequences of social media use, but notes that the most important impact of social media use is in the promotion of a civil society and lasting change. Social media, he argues, can create shared awareness, which makes it harder for repressive regimes to maintain the status quo. Malcolm Gladwell argues that social media is unlikely to make a difference. Social change requires powerful and interpersonal ties. It is interpersonal connections that will motivate social activism, he asserts. Social media may be effective in the short term, but cannot generate the levels of commitment necessary to effect social change.

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Issue 10. Is Hate Speech in the Media Directly Affecting Our Culture? 218

YES: **Henry A. Giroux**, from “Living in a Culture of Cruelty: Democracy as Spectacle,” *Truthout* (September 2, 2009) 222

NO: **Georgie Ann Weatherby and Brian Scoggins**, from “A Content Analysis of Persuasion Techniques Used on White Supremacist Websites,” *Journal of Hate Studies* (vol. 4, 2005–2006) 228

In this essay, Henry Giroux questions how and why our culture has become so mean spirited. By addressing media content in news and popular fare, he analyzes how the politics of a “pedagogy of hate” has become an exercise in power that ultimately has created a “culture of cruelty.” As part of this imposed philosophy, citizens have begun to question and undermine our government’s responsibility to protect their interests. Georgie Ann Weatherby and Brian Scoggins examine the content of the Web pages of four extremist groups on the Internet and discuss the persuasive techniques each uses. They find that the sites draw from traditional tactics that “soft-pedal” positions that emphasize recruiting, while downplaying the messages of hate.

Issue 11. Does Online Communication Compromise the Rights of an Individual When Information Is “Anonymous?” 238

YES: **Neil Swidey**, from “Inside the Mind of the Anonymous Online Poster,” *Boston.com* (June 20, 2010) 242

NO: **Ian Lloyd**, from “Privacy, Anonymity and the Internet,” *Electronic Journal of Comparative Law* (vol. 13, no. 1, March 2009) 250

Neil Swidey addresses the issue of anonymous online posters who register their opinions on the *Boston Globe* Web site, www.Boston.com. He discusses how some abusive and vitriolic postings sometimes have to be eliminated by site moderators, and how important it is to some people to have access to posting their opinions online. Unlike traditional newspapers, where comments to the editor contain a reader’s name and address, the anonymous poster sometimes becomes so offensive that the nature and value of online commentary are called into question. In examining the legal relationship between privacy and anonymity, Ian Lloyd provides both a legal approach toward protecting privacy and anonymity, and provides examples of how everyday behavior challenges our expectations of anonymity and privacy when data collections violate a person’s reasonable expectation of privacy. He writes that although the legal approach toward more online communication attempts to protect personal rights, good intentions often backfire, and life in the digital age comes with some possible breaches of trust.

Issue 12. Do Copyright Laws Protect Ownership of Intellectual Property? 259

YES: **Siva Vaidhyathan**, from “Copyright Jungle,” *Columbia Journalism Review* (September/October 2006) 263

NO: **Stephanie C. Ardito**, from “MySpace and YouTube Meet the Copyright Cops,” *Searcher* (May 2007) 272

In this selection, Siva Vaidhyathan discusses how applications of copyright to music, film, publishing, and software companies all result in a complex system of trying to protect original ownership of intellectual property. The author gives several examples, including Google’s efforts to digitize entire libraries, but reminds us that copyright also gives owners

the right to say no. Stephanie Ardito examines how social networking sites have created problems for protecting copyright, because laws and enforcement of copyright law are so difficult. She believes big media companies and social networking sites will ultimately give up trying to enforce copyright, because it is too expensive and time consuming.

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Issue 13. Did Consolidation of the Music Industry Hurt Music Distribution? 288

YES: Greg Kot, from *Ripped: How the Wired Generation Revolutionized Music* (Simon & Schuster, 2009) 291

NO: Panos Panay, from “Rethinking Music: The Future of Making Money as a Performing Musician,” in *Rethinking Music: A Briefing Book*, http://cyber.law.harvard.edu/sites/cyber.law.harvard.edu/files/Rethinking_Music_Briefing_Book_April-25-2011.pdf 299

Greg Kot explains the business model that dominated the recording industry throughout the 1990s and into the 2000s. In this excerpt, he identifies how rapidly the old business model crumbled and how record executives feared the evolving technological changes that foretold of an economic model that would revolutionize the corporate music structure. Panos Panay examines specific changes to the live music scene, and the growth of niche markets that contributed to the evolution of several new models for the music business. Despite a poor economy in 2010, fans are becoming more active and involved in the production of a successful band and/or record. Along with a new model of entrepreneurship, Panay offers insights to how the recording industry is evolving.

Issue 14. Should Newspapers Shut Down Their Presses? 308

YES: Clay Shirky, from “Newspapers and Thinking the Unthinkable,” www.shirky.com/weblog/2009/03/newspapers-and-thinking-the-unthinkable/ 311

NO: Paul Farhi, from “A Bright Future for Newspapers,” *American Journalism Review* (June/July 2005) 317

Clay Shirky argues that the old economies of newspapers are destroyed in the digital age. This is a revolution similar to that which occurred with the invention of the printing press. No one knows what the future will hold, but we can only hope that journalism is not lost with the demise of newspapers. All news media are facing challenges in these difficult economic times. Paul Farhi, a *Washington Post* staff writer, argues that newspapers have unique competitive advantages that should assure that the worst case won't happen.

Issue 15. Do New Business Models Result in Greater Consumer Choice of Products and Ideas? 326

YES: Chris Anderson, from “The Long Tail: How Technology Is Turning Mass Markets into Millions of Niches,” in *The Long Tail: Why the Future of Business Is Selling Less of More* (Hyperion, 2006) 330

NO: Kathryn C. Montgomery, from “Social Marketing in the New Millennium,” in *Generation Digital: Politics, Commerce, and Childhood in the Age of the Internet* (MIT Press, 2007) 335

Chris Anderson, an editor of *Wired* magazine, writes of the decline of the mass market and the rise of niche markets. He claims that the future of business, particularly in book, music, and DVD sales, will shift toward selling a wider range of media to audiences that have much broader interests. Professor Kathryn Montgomery looks at the cooperative relationships between social interest groups and media content providers, to better understand how themes with social objectives permeate media content.

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Issue 16. Are Youth Indifferent to News and Politics? 350

YES: David T. Z. Mindich, from “Journalism and Citizenship: Making the Connection,” *Nieman Reports* (Winter 2008) 353

NO: Pew Internet & American Life Project, from *The Internet and Civic Engagement* (September 2009), www.pewinternet.org 358

Author and professor David T. Z. Mindich addresses the sobering facts of why youth do not follow the news. He links this with low voter turnout, a widening knowledge gap between younger and older citizens, and a lack of trust in news media. The author of *Tuned Out: Why Americans Under 40 Don't Follow the News*, Mindich explores the essential link between news and information and being an informed and engaged citizen. The Pew Internet & American Life Project released *The Internet and Civic Engagement* in 2009. This report examined whether the Internet could change long-established patterns of civic and political involvement. Based on a sample of more than 2,000 adults, the project found that new forms of civic engagement based on the Internet, blogs, and social media have the potential to alter long-standing patterns of information and engagement of younger voters.

Issue 17. Are Online Services Responsible for an Increase in Bullying and Harassment? 367

YES: Penny A. Leisring, from “Stalking Made Easy: How Information and Communication Technologies Are Influencing the Way People Monitor and Harass One Another,” in Sharon Kleinman, ed., *The Culture of Efficiency* (Peter Lang, 2009) 371

NO: Amanda Lenhart, from “Cyberbullying and Online Teens,” Pew Internet & American Life Project (June 27, 2007) 379

Penny Leisring discusses negative effects of using online technology to cyberstalk or harass someone. Use of social networking, e-mail, GPS systems, cell phone spamming, and caller ID all can be used to create a threatening or hostile environment for those people who use them for antisocial purposes. The author also addresses the situations that lend themselves most often to these undesirable uses of communication technology, such as in the break-up of romantic relationships, abusive relationships, or just plain hostile behaviors and interactions. Amanda Lenhart reports the findings of a Pew Internet & American Life Project that

investigated the likelihood of teen harassment and cyberbullying and finds that the most likely candidates to experience online abuse are girls between the ages of 15 and 17, though the reported statistics for all teens of both genders are disturbing. However, Amanda Lenhart reports that, still, more teens report being bullied offline than online.

Issue 18. Are People Better Informed in the Information Society? 386

YES: Linda A. Jackson, Alexander von Eye, Frank A. Biocca, Gretchen Barbatsis, Yong Zhao, and Hiram E. Fitzgerald, from “Does Home Internet Use Influence the Academic Performance of Low-Income Children?” *Developmental Psychology* (vol. 42, no. 3, 2006) 389

NO: Mark Bauerlein, from *The Dumbest Generation: How the Digital Age Stupefies Young Americans and Jeopardizes Our Future* (Tarcher/Penguin, 2008) 399

Linda Jackson et al. conducted a 16-month survey of Internet use by youth age 10–18 in low-income homes. They found that youth who used the Internet more had higher scores on standardized tests of reading achievement and higher GPAs. This work supports the optimism surrounding the Internet as a tool to level the educational playing field. Mark Bauerlein finds the hopes for better-educated youth in the digital age to be an empty promise. Youth spend much of their leisure time in front of computer and television screens, but the information age has failed to produce a well-informed, thoughtful public. Instead we have a nation of know-nothings who don't read, follow politics, or vote—and who can't compete internationally.

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