Title: Understanding Mass Media News – The 1938 “War of the Worlds” Broadcast and the Power of Radio in the 1930s

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Introduction to Lesson Plan:

Historical context and Introduction:

“Radio Listeners in Panic, Taking War Drama As Fact.

Many Flee Homes to Escape ‘Gas Raid from Mars’ – Phone Calls Swamp Police at Broadcast of Wells Fantasy.”

So began the front page story for the New York Times on 31 October 1938. What was intended as an entertaining interpretation of H.G. Wells’ 1898 classic science fiction tale “The War of the Worlds” caused a wave of mass hysteria that frightened almost one million Americans. Scared listeners fled their homes, some covered their faces with wet towels to protect themselves from the “poison gas,” some packed their personal belongings and furniture. Roads and highways in New York and New Jersey were jammed. Terrified citizens called their local police stations asking for confirmation. In Newark, nurses and doctors who volunteered to help the “injured.” The impact of the broadcast was felt nation-wide. People in many American cities believed that war had begun, that New York and New Jersey were being destroyed, and that the invading Martians would soon move west. “My God,” exclaimed a San Francisco resident, “where can I volunteer my service? We’ve got to stop this thing!” A listener from Dayton, Ohio called the New York Times to find out “What time will it be the end of the world?”

Research into the phenomenon began immediately. CBS, the broadcasting network, conducted a survey within a week of the broadcast. Ultimately, the most

prominent study was led by social psychologist Hadley Cantril of the Princeton Radio Project. Funded by the General Education Board (established by John D. Rockefeller in 1903), Cantril’s investigation sought the reasons why some listeners would believe something so unlikely and improbable. He and his team of psychologists concluded that what caused fear and panic were the techniques used in the presentation of the “news” rather than an understanding of the story. The incredible power held by radio, the first instrument of instant mass communication, was revealed.²

In the 1930s, radio broadcasting had become the single most potent force in mass communication. By 1935, an estimated 78 million Americans were habitual listeners, spending nearly seven times as many hours listening to the radio as they spent in the movie theaters - “approximately 150 million hours a week before the screen, but nearly one billion hours before the loud-speaker.”³ Twenty six million households, about 67% of all America owned at least one radio. This figure represented significantly more people than those that had telephones or electricity.⁴ Families tuned in for at least five hours a day to the fare offered by three major networks – NBC Red, NBC Blue, CBS – and a variety of local stations. Entertainment shows were the overwhelming favorites. Americans enjoyed quiz shows, comedies, musical variety shows, live sporting events, dramas, thrillers, adventure series – all representing the early days of radio’s “Golden Age.”⁵

² “The Invasion from Mars,” Princeton Radio Research Project, Orson Welles Broadcast Study, Box 361, Folder 3724, General Education Board Archives, The Rockefeller Archive Center, Sleepy Hollow, New York. For the published version of the study, see Hadley Cantril, The Invasion From Mars: A Study in the Psychology of Panic (Princeton, 1940).
⁵ Douglas, Listening In, p. 166; Hilmes, Radio Voices, pp. 183, 114.
Although not as significant in daily broadcasting as entertainment, news “bulletins” and news broadcasts were becoming more prominent, bringing the latest information about important events directly and immediately into American homes. In 1932, for example, the nation was mesmerized by the news of the kidnapping of Charles Lindbergh’s son and tuned in for hours of radio coverage offering the latest updates. A year later, on-the-scene interviews following an assassination attempt against President-elect Franklin Roosevelt were broadcast to a widening American audience.⁶ Important political events like Presidential conventions and election night returns were covered by radio reporters, the results sent out over the airwaves to listeners. By the 1930’s, the power of radio was sensed by politicians, especially Roosevelt, who used radio in his campaigning as well as for his “Fireside Chats.” Other extreme political figures like Huey Long and Father Coughlin also used radio broadcasts to spread their own political ideas.

As international crises changed world affairs in the late 1930s, so too did they change the nature and importance of radio news broadcasting. The aggressive actions of Hitler’s Germany, Mussolini’s Italy, and a militaristic Japan turned American’s attention, previously focused on the Great Depression, to a deeper concern about the world. No event of the late 1930s captured the attention of American listeners more than the coverage of the Munich crisis. From 12 Sept. to 30 Sept. 30, 1938, listeners followed the crisis from Hitler’s first declaration against the Sudetenland to Neville Chamberlain’s assertion that the Munich Agreement would lead to “peace in our time.” Radio reporter

H.V. Kaltenborn made 102 broadcasts in 18 days. More radios were sold in that three week period that at any other similar time period in history. By 1940, more than 81% of all American families owned radios, an increase from 67% in 1935. And most people now relied on radio for important news bulletins. According to historian Susan Douglas, the newspaper “extra” was all but obsolete by 1938. The transformation of news radio to being the most significant source of instant information for Americans would be completed by the end of World War II in 1945.

A sense of crisis and foreboding about world events coupled with an increasing reliance on radio for information provided that backdrop to the War of the Worlds broadcast and its immediate aftermath. In many ways, Americans in the post September 11th world are confronting a similar sense of crisis and a deepening awareness of world affairs. However, mass media has become increasingly more varied and complex in the 21st century. In addition to radio, Americans can choose from a vast array of offerings from standard print sources to commercial television, cable networks and internet sites. The purpose of this lesson, then, is to help students become intelligent and critical consumers of information by understanding and assessing the techniques used by mass media. Before we can evaluate and form judgments about critical issues in our world, we should be able to distinguish the actual news from the ways in which the news is presented.

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Course and level – 11 grade American History, Regents Level

Fit in NY State Curriculum: The lesson could be used as an introduction to a longer project on Mass Media (as is done here) or as part of the coursework on American culture in the 1930s

The Lesson

Essential Questions:
1. How can we identify those characteristics employed by mass media as it tries to present convincing news?
2. How do the ways in which mass media present the news affect our perception of the actual news?
3. How can we, as consumers of mass media news, assess the validity of what we are seeing and hearing?

Student Objectives:
1. Students will be able to apply and exercise listening skills to collect aural data from selected excerpts of the War of the Worlds broadcast, 30 October 1938.
2. Students will compare their initial observations with those made by professional social psychologists from Princeton.
3. Students will apply their observations to current examples of mass media news.
4. Students will develop their reflective writing skills and coherent paragraph development.

Connection to National Standards
(http://nchs.ucla.edu/standards/us-standards5-12.html)

Era 7: The Emergence of Modern America (1890-1930)
Standard 3: How the United States changed from the end of World War I to the eve of the Great Depression.
Standard 3C: The student understands how new cultural movements reflected and changed American society. Analyze how radio, movies, newspapers, and popular magazines created mass culture. [Examine the influence of ideas]

Era 10: Contemporary United States (1968 to the present)
Standard 2: Economic, social, and cultural developments in contemporary United States;
Standard 2D: Explain the influence of media on contemporary American culture. [Explain historical continuity and change]
Connection to New York State Standards
(http://www.emsc.nysed.gov/ciai/socst/socstands/socstand.html)

Standard 1: History of the United States and New York: use a variety of intellectual skills to demonstrate their understanding of major ideas, eras, themes, developments, and turning points in the history of the United States and New York.

Key Idea 1: The study of New York State and United States history requires an analysis of the development of American culture, its diversity and multicultural context, and the ways people are unified by many values, practices, and traditions.

Performance Indicators--Students will: • analyze the development of American culture, explaining how ideas, values, beliefs, and traditions have changed over time and how they unite all Americans

Time Suggestions for the Lesson

- Initial “War of Worlds” Lesson (as outlined in this plan) – 3 days
- Media Impact Log (MiLog) Project (included with this plan) – 6 - 8 weeks / 1 assignment per week.

Procedure:

Day 1:

1. Motivation: Solicit student response to the basic idea of an alien invasion as featured in the recent War of the Worlds movie starring Tom Cruise and the original 1898 novel by H.G. Wells. Question: Would you believe the “news” of an alien invasion if you heard it or saw it reported in today’s mass media?

2. Introduce the historical response to the War of the Worlds broadcast in 1938 i.e. news of an alien invasion was broadcast to Americans in October 1938 and many believed it. Use excerpts from The New York Times, 31 October 1938 (available using Proquest’s Historical New York Times data base).

3. Introduce the “Focus Questions” 1. Why did some ONE MILLION PEOPLE believe this broadcast? 2. What techniques were used in this RADIO BROADCAST that made this “news” so convincing?

N.B. Steps 1 – 3 should be limited to approximately 6 minutes. The discussion could continue for a longer period of time if you choose to interrupt the playing of the broadcast.

4. Distribute the “Observation Sheet.” Begin listening to the actual “War of the Worlds” broadcast. To prepare the broadcast, go to the Mercury Theater of
the Air web site (http://www.mercurytheatre.info/) and find the broadcast listing; it should be downloaded before use in class. Since simply listening to something is a very difficult activity for people in the 21st century, it would be very useful to remind the students that they need to exercise their listening skills – ask them to focus on what they hear and use their imagination. Model a response to the first four minutes (“Gas Explosion on Mars”) - have students enter their comments in the “What’s News?” and “Radio Techniques/ Styles” columns and review their responses.

5. Continue listening to the next 14 minutes of the broadcast. Have students continue to add data to their “Observation Sheet.”

6. After the listening has ended, ask the students to complete the following Reflection questions for homework (found on the reverse side of the “Observation Sheet”):
   - Which of the “Radio Techniques” do you think were most effective in 1938? Make a “TOP THREE LIST” based on the data you collected which listening.
   - If you were alive in 1938, do you think you might have believed this “news”? Why or why not?

Day 2:

1. Review students responses as recorded on the Observation Sheet AND their responses to the reflection questions. Especially interesting would be the discussion about whether or not they would have believed that broadcast.

2. Document Analysis: Have students compare their responses to some of the conclusions reached by the researchers for the Princeton Radio Project. Divide the class into 4 groups and give each group one of the documents, which are excerpts from the study conducted by the Princeton Radio Project.
   - Document 1: “Radio as accepted vehicle for important announcements”
   - Document 2: “Prestige of the speaker”
   - Document 3: “Specific incidents understood”
   - Document 4: “Everybody baffled”
   Students could read the documents individually or as a group and respond to question #2. An initial vocabulary activity would require the use of dictionaries.

3. Groups share the explanations given in their assigned document. Teacher should record responses under the heading “Techniques used by radio that made the broadcast believable.”

4. Have students write one or two reflective paragraphs on which of these media techniques would have most affected your perception of this “news” and why.

5. For homework: Have students answer question #3 on the back of each document after watching 10 minutes of a current television news broadcast.
Day 3:

1. Teacher should lead students in a discussion about how the techniques used by television are similar to or different from those used in the War of the Worlds broadcast.

2. Introduce “MiLog Project” (“Media Impact Log” - see separate sheet for description and instructions). This project should continue for 6-8 weeks, depending on the marking period schedule.

3. The culminating activity for the MiLog Project will be a written assessment – “Guidelines To Finding a Reliable News Source” – based on their experience observing contemporary mass media. Students will identify their choice(s) for a reliable news source(s) by:
   a) developing a list of evaluation criteria
   b) apply their criteria to their choice of a reliable source(s) and
   c) give explanations for their choice(s) using data they’ve collected in the MiLogs.

Suggestions for Further Reading/ Useful Links:

Books:


Links: For the “War of the Worlds”

The Mercury Theater on the Air - [http://www.mercurytheatre.info/](http://www.mercurytheatre.info/) contains War of the Worlds broadcast (51:24) and, later down on list, a conversation between Orson Welles and HG Wells.
A script of the War of the Worlds broadcast is found at http://www.sacred-texts.com/ufo/mars/wow.htm

**Links: On Radio Broadcasting**

The Radio Hall of Fame -  [http://www.radiohof.org/inducteesaz.html](http://www.radiohof.org/inducteesaz.html)
Contains short audio clips with explanatory text for radio personalities and radio shows; linked to the Museum of Broadcast Communications

The link is to Docufest, an education resource from MBC; WWII docufest contains FDR’s fireside chats on Greer Attack (Sept. 11, 1941) and response to Pearl Harbor (Dec. 9, 1941);

Interesting resources from the University of Maryland

First Generation Radio Archives -  [http://www.radioarchives.org/sets/Sampler.htm](http://www.radioarchives.org/sets/Sampler.htm)
Contains a sampler of 16 radio shows available for sale on 5 cds for $9.95
Radio as accepted vehicle for important announcements

The first wide use of radio in the country was to broadcast election returns. Since that time, important announcements of local, national and international significance have been repeatedly made. A few short weeks before this broadcast, millions of listeners had kept their radios tuned for the latest news from Europe apparently about to go to war. They had learned to expect that musical programs, dramas, broadcasts of all kinds would be cut off in a serious emergency to inform or warn an eager and anxious public. A large proportion of listeners, particularly those in the lower income and educational brackets, have grown to rely more on the radio than on the newspapers for their news. The confidence people have in radio as a source of news is shown in the answer to a question asked by the Fortune poll — "Which of the two — radio or newspaper — gives you news freer from prejudice?" Seventeen per cent answered "newspaper," 49.7 per cent believed radio news is freer from prejudice, while the rest either think both media are the same, or don't know which was less prejudiced.

From the "Meridian Room" in the "Park Plaza" of New York City, the listener tuned to the Mercury Theatre on this fateful night, heard the music of "Ramon Raquello and his orchestra." Soon after the first piece had begun an announcer broke in, "Ladies and gentlemen, we interrupt our program of dance music to bring you a special bulletin from the Intercontinental Radio News." With our present distance it is easy to be suspicious of "intercontinental" news. But in the context of the program, such skepticism is reduced. This report brought the story of the first explosions on Mars. The music was resumed only to be followed by another break: "Ladies and Gentlemen, following on the news given in our bulletin a moment ago, the Government Meteorological Bureau has requested the large observatories of the country to keep an astronomical watch. . . ." This bulletin contains the information that "a huge flaming object, believed to be a meteorite, fell on a farm in the neighborhood of Grovers Mill, New Jersey." The swing band gets in 20 seconds more. Then the invasion continues uninterruptedly.

Almost all of the listeners, who had been frightened and who were interviewed, mentioned somewhere during the course of their retrospections, the confidence they had in radio and their expectation that it would be used for such important announcements. A few of their comments indicate their attitudes:

"We have so much faith in broadcasting. In a crisis it has to reach all people. That's what radio is here for."

"The announcer would not say if it was not true. They always quote if something is a play. "It was told so emphatically and we have so much faith in the radio."

"When I hear news on the radio I believe it is authentic."

"I always feel that the commentators bring the best possible news. Even after this I still will believe what I hear on the radio."

"It didn't sound like a play the way it interrupted the music when it started."

"I naturally thought it was true because of the way the news flash came on the air."

"What I hear on the radio I believe is authentic. It is the most important instrument in directing people in disaster."

"I always believe the news I hear on the radio. This was just like real news and left no doubt in my mind that it was true."

2 Fortune, Aug. 1939, p. 65. For a thorough discussion of radio news broadcasting, see Paul Lazarsfeld, Radio and the Printed Word, Section 2.
Document #1 Analysis

Answer these questions on a separate sheet of loose-leaf paper

1. Look up the definitions of all the words in **bold face**. Write out the definitions of the words as they are used in the document.

2. The study this document comes from was an effort to explain why the War of the Worlds broadcast was believed by so many people. Using specific examples from the document, make a list of the characteristics that made “Radio [the] accepted vehicle for important announcements.”

3. Watch at least 10 minutes of a current television news broadcast, preferably one that begins at the top of every hour.
   a) Identify the station you watched and what time the news was on.
   b) List the general topics of the news stories you heard AND
   c) Describe any techniques used by television that are similar or related to the ones described in your document.
   d) If you can’t find any, observe and write down any other techniques you think television is using to make their report more believable.
Prestige of speakers

It is a well known fact to the social psychologist, the advertiser, and the propagandist that an idea or a product has a better chance of being accepted if it can be endorsed by, or if [it] emanates from some well-known person whose character, ability, or status is highly valued. The effect of this prestige suggestion is especially great when an individual himself has no frame of reference by means of which he can judge or give meaning to a particular situation that confronts him and when he needs or is interested in making a judgment or finding a meaning. The strange events reported by the announcers in this broadcast were so far removed from ordinary experience and yet of such great potential and personal significance to the listener that he was both bewildered and in need of some standard of judgment. As in many situations where events and ideas are so complicated or far removed from one's own immediate everyday experience that only the expert can really understand them, here, too, the Layman was forced to rely on the expert for his interpretation.

The logical expert in this instance was the astronomer. Those mentioned (all fictitious) were Professor Farrell of the Mount Jennings Observatory of Chicago, Professor Pierson of the Princeton Observatory, Professor Morse of MacMillan University in Toronto, Professor Indellkoffer of the California Astronomical Society and "astronomers and scientific bodies" in England, France, and Germany. Professor Richard Pierson (Orson Welles) was the chief character in the drama.

When the situation called for organized defense and action the expert was once more brought in. General Montgomery Smith, Commander of the State Militia at Trenton, Mr. Harry McDonald, vice-president of the Red Cross, Captain Lansing of the Signal Corps, and finally the Secretary of the Interior described the situation, gave orders for evacuation and attack, or urged every man to do his duty. It is interesting to notice that only the office of the Secretary of the Interior was named. Here the listener was affected entirely by the institutional role and status of an unnamed speaker. The institutional prestige of the other experts and authorities is obviously more meaningful and important than the individuals themselves.

This dramatic technique had its effect:

“I believed the broadcast as soon as I heard the professor from Princeton and the officials in Washington.”
“When the Princeton professor talked to the people then I was really scared.”
“I knew it was an awfully dangerous situation when all those military men were there and the Secretary of State spoke.”
“If so many of those astronomers saw the explosions they must have been real. They ought to know.”
“All those authorities told us it was true and who am I to doubt them.”
1. Look up the definitions of all the words in **bold face**. Write out the definitions of the words as they are used in the document.

2. The study this document comes from was an effort to explain why the War of the Worlds broadcast was believed by so many people. Using specific examples from the document, make a list of the characteristics that made “Prestige of speakers” an important influence in getting people to believe that the broadcast was authentic.

3. Watch at least 10 minutes of a current television news broadcast, preferably one that begins at the top of every hour.
   a. Identify the station you watched and what time the news was on.
   b. List the general topics of the news stories you heard AND
   c. Describe any techniques used by television that are similar or related to the ones described in your document.
   d. If you can’t find any, observe and write down any other techniques you think television is using the make their report more believable.
Specific incidents understood.
The realistic nature of the broadcast was further enhanced by descriptions of particular occurrences that a listener could readily imagine. Liberal use was made of the colloquial expression to be expected on such an occasion. The gas was "a sort of yellowish-green;" the cop warned "One side, there. Keep back, I tell you;" a voice shouts, "The darn thing's unscrewing." An example of the specificity of detail is the announcement of Brigadier General Montgomery Smith: "I have been requested by the Governor of New Jersey to place the counties of Mercer and Middlesex as far west as Princeton, and east to Jamesburg, under martial law. No one will be permitted to enter this area except by special pass issued by state or military authorities. Four companies of State Militia are proceeding from Trenton to Grovers Mill and will aid in the evacuation of homes within the range of military operations."

Particularly frightening to listeners in the New Jersey and Manhattan areas were the mentions of places well known to them. The towns of Grovers Mill, Princeton, and Trenton, New Jersey were featured early in the broadcast; Plainsboro, Allentown, Morristown, the Watchung Mountains, Bayonne, the Hutchison [sic] River Parkway, Newark, the Palisades, Times Square, Fifth Avenue, the Pulaski Skyway, the Holland Tunnel, are all familiar to Jerseyites and New Yorkers. And listeners throughout the country would certainly recognize many of these names as real.

“The mention of highway numbers and the names of places I knew sure got me excited. (People expect a writer to write about familiar places, like Times Square, but do not expect him to know about small streets like South Street).”

“When they identified Phillips (the first announcer) in the Trenton hospital I was most scared.”

“When he told how the people in New York were all dying, I was terribly frightened.”

“When the announcer described the way he looked into the pit and the way the death ray worked, it got me.”

“When the announcer choked from the gas and fell from the microphone, I was most scared.”
1  Look up the definitions of all the words in **bold face**. Write out the definitions of the words as they are used in the document.

2  The study this document comes from was an effort to explain why the War of the Worlds broadcast was believed by so many people. Using specific examples from the document, make a list of the characteristics that helped the listener **understand the specific incidents** that were being described in the broadcast.

3  Watch at least 10 minutes of a current television news broadcast, preferably one that begins at the top of every hour.
   e)  Identify the station you watched and what time the news was on.
   f)  List the general topics of the news stories you heard AND
   g)  Describe any techniques used by television that are similar or related to the ones described in your document.
   h)  If you can’t find any, observe and write down any other techniques you think television is using the make their report more believable.
Everybody baffled.

The events reported proceeded from the relatively credible to the highly incredible. The first announcements were more or less believable although unusual to be sure. First there is an "atmospheric disturbance," then "explosions of incandescent gas." A scientist then reports that his seismograph has registered a shock of earthquake intensity. This is followed by the discovery of a meteorite that has splintered nearby trees in its fall. So far so good.

But as the less credible bits of the story begin to enter, the clever dramatist also indicates that he, too, has difficulty in believing what he sees. When we learn that the object is no meteorite but a metal casing, we are also told that the whole scene is "a strange scene like something out of a modern Arabian Nights," "fantastic," that the "more daring souls are venturing near." Before we are informed that the end of the casing is beginning to unscrew, we experience the announcer's own astonishment: "Ladies and Gentlemen, this is terrific!" When the top is off he says, "This is the most terrifying thing I have ever witnessed. . . This is the most extraordinary experience. I can't find words. . ." A few minutes later, Professor Pierson says, "I can give you no authoritative information—either as to their nature, their origin, or their purposes here on earth. . . It's all too evident that these creatures have scientific knowledge far in advance of our own. It is my guess. . ." After the battle at Grovers Mill between the Thing and the soldiers, the announcer gives the listeners a final justification for the incredulous reports to follow: "I have a grave announcement to make. Incredible as it may seem, both the observation of science and the evidence of our eyes lead to the inescapable assumption that those strange beings who landed in the Jersey farmlands tonight are the vanguard of an invading army from the planet Mars."

The bewilderment of the listener is shared by the eyewitness. When the scientist is himself puzzled, the layman recognizes the extraordinary intelligence of the strange creatures. No explanation of the event can be provided. The resignation and hopelessness of the Secretary of the Interior, counseling us to "place our faith in God," provides no effective guide for action. No possible frames of reference can be applied to judge the rapid-fire of events. Panic is inescapable.
Document #4 Analysis

Answer these questions on a separate sheet of loose-leaf paper

1. Look up the definitions of all the words in bold face. Write out the definitions of the words as they are used in the document.

2. The study this document comes from was an effort to explain why the “War of the Worlds” broadcast was believed by so many people. Using specific examples from the document, explain how everyone being baffled help make people believe the broadcast.

3. Watch at least 10 minutes of a current television news broadcast, preferably one that begins at the top of every hour.
   a) Identify the station you watched and what time the news was on.
   b) List the general topics of the news stories you heard AND
   c) Describe any techniques used by television that are similar or related to the ones described in your document.
   d) If you can’t find any, observe and write down any other techniques you think television is using the make their report more believable.
What's a MiLOG? First, you need to understand BLOGS, a NEW and SIGNIFICANT feature in the today’s Mass Media.

“A blog is a personal diary. A daily pulpit. A collaborative space. A political soapbox. A breaking-news outlet. A collection of links. Your own private thoughts. Memos to the world. Your blog is whatever you want it to be. There are millions of them, in all shapes and sizes…. In simple terms, a blog is a web site, where you write stuff on an ongoing basis. New stuff shows up at the top, so your visitors can read what’s new. Then they comment on it or link to it or email you. Or not.”


So, what's a MiLOG? It’s your own, personal Media Impact Log (get it?) a form of Mass Media commentary unique to Dr. Maika's American History classes.

Why MiLOGS? You will be creating your own MiLOGS so that you can learn about the impact of various forms of Mass Media on the “News” they present AND so that you can share what you've learned with others.

What does a MiLOG look like? It begins with “Basic Data” – your name, the type of media you observed, the date you observed it and for how long (minimum 10 minutes). Next, it contains at least THREE paragraphs in which you 1. describe the news stories that were offered 2. identify a specific technique(s) used by media as it presented the news and 3. your explanation and commentary on how the media techniques impacted the way you or others might have perceived the story.

What MUST I write about in my MiLOG? You must write the required three paragraphs for a minimum of THREE different news media formats: Network TV, Cable TV, Online sources, Blogs, Radio, Ethnic/Alternative TV/Radio, Newspapers, and Magazines. To learn more about these different formats, see “State of the Media Report, 2006,” Project For Excellence in Journalism, www.stateofthemedia.org/2006/index.asp.

When are MiLOGS due? Every Monday.

What will I do with my MiLOG? Two things: first, you will share it with at least one other class member each Monday. That classmate will write a response TO your MiLOG ON your MiLOG (using language and sentiment appropriate for school, of course). Second, you will submit your MiLOGS as part of this Mass Media Project (10 points per MiLog. Late Penalties – 5 points per day).

Culminating Project: Create your own “Guidelines To Finding a Reliable News Source.” More information to be provided.
News Media Formats

Network TV – e.g. ABC, CBS, NBC, Fox, WB11, WOR, PBS

Cable TV – e.g. CNN, MSNBC, BBC, FOX, ESPN

Online sources – most newspapers and TV networks have their own websites (e.g. NYTimes.com, CNN.com). Also, you might want to check out Yahoo.com, Google News, AOL.com.

Blogs – e.g. Daily Kos, Eschaton, Power Line, Instapundit, Little Green Footballs, Crooks and Liars

Radio – e.g. anything on AM or FM

Ethnic TV – e.g. Univision, Telemundo

Newspapers – e.g. NY Times, Daily News, Journal News, Wall St. Journal, USA Today

Magazines – e.g. Time, Newsweek, U.S. News and World Report
**Observation Sheet** - “War of the Worlds” Broadcast (30 October 1938)  

**Directions:** As you listen to the first 18 minutes of the broadcast, record your observations in the “What’s News?” and “Radio Techniques / Styles” columns following instructions given in class.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>What’s “News?”</th>
<th>Radio Technique/Styles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gas Explosions on Mars</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Earthquake-like explosion in Princeton, New Jersey</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Meteorite Explosion in Grovers Mill, New Jersey</td>
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<tr>
<td>Observation of the “thing” that landed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Interview with Mr. Wilmuth, farm owner</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>The “thing” opens up</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The first “attack”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Reflection: Answer these questions after listening to the “War of the Worlds” Broadcast:

1. Which of the “Radio Techniques” do you think were most effective in 1938? Make a “TOP THREE LIST” based on the data you collected which listening.

2. If you were alive in 1938, do you think you might have believed this “news”? Why or why not?
From the 2005 Film

From the 1953 Film
The Original Book
Written in 1898

THE WAR OF THE WORLDS
H.G. WELLS
Illustrated by EDWARD GOREY
Orson Welles

The Mercury Theater of the Air

30 October 1938
All the News That's Fit to Print.

THE NEW YORK TIMES.

VOL. LXXXVIII. No. 25992.
NEW YORK, MONDAY, OCTOBER 31, 1888.

THREE CENTS.

CENTRAL AMERICAN BLOC Likely at Lime Park

San Salvador, Oct. 29.—The Central American
Bloc is likely to join the Lime Park
Conference in the United States.

RAILWAY BANKING BILL Passes Senate

Washington, Oct. 30.—The Railway Banking
Bill passed the Senate today.

OUDSTED JUDGES FIND REFUGE IN POLAND

After Apostate Magistrate

Poland, Oct. 29.—Apostate Magistrate
was expelled from the Polish
Judiciary yesterday.

FREE MANSFIELD—What Is a Positive
—and Other Changes

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Radio Listeners in Panic, Taking War Drama as Fact

Many Flee Homes to Escape ‘Gas Raid From Mars’—Phone Calls Swamp Police at Broadcast of Wells Fantasy

A wave of mass hysteria seized thousands of radio listeners throughout the nation between 8:15 and 9:30 o’clock last night when a broadcast of a dramatization of H. G. Wells’s fantasy, “The War of the Worlds,” led thousands to believe that an interplanetary conflict had started with invading Martians spreading wide death and destruction in New Jersey and New York.

The broadcast, which disrupted households, interrupted religious services, created traffic jams and clogged communications systems, was made by Orson Welles, who as the radio character, “The Shadow,” used to give “the creepies” to countless child listeners. This time at least a score of adults required medical treatment for shock and hysteria.

In Newark, in a single block at Heidion Terrace and Hawthorne Avenue, more than twenty families rushed out of their houses with wet handkerchiefs and towels over their faces to flee from what they believed was to be a gas raid. Some began moving household furniture.

Throughout New York families left their homes, some to flee to near-by parks. Thousands of persons called the police, newspapers and radio stations here and in other cities of the United States and Canada seeking advice on protective measures against the raids.

The program was produced by Mr. Welles and the Mercury Theatre on the Air over station WABC and the Columbia Broadcasting System’s coast-to-coast network, from 8 to 9 o’clock.

The radio play, as presented, was to simulate a regular radio program with a “break-in” for the material of the play. The radio listeners, apparently, missed or did not listen to the introduction, which was: “The Columbia Broadcasting System and its affiliated stations present Orson Welles and the Mercury Theatre on the Air in ‘The War of the Worlds’ by H. G. Wells.”

They also failed to associate the program with the newspaper listing of the program, announced as “Today: 8:00-9:00—Play: H. G. Wells’s ‘War of the Worlds’—WABC.” They ignored three additional announcements made during the broadcast emphasizing its fictional nature.

Mr. Welles opened the program with a description of the series of

Continued on Page Four
Focus Questions

- Why did some ONE MILLION PEOPLE believe this broadcast?

- What techniques were used in this RADIO BROADCAST that made this “news” so convincing?

Next: How to use “the chart”
The Actual Radio Broadcast – 30 October 1938

Download the recording from http://www.mercurytheatre.info/
Insert download using “Insert – Movies and Sounds – Sound from file”
Answer these questions after listening to the “War of the Worlds” Broadcast

• Which of the “Radio Techniques” do you think were most effective in 1938? Make a “TOP THREE LIST” based on the data you collected which listening.

• If you were alive in 1938, do you think you might have believed this “news”? Why or why not?