***HANDOUT 1: STARTING POINTS FOR INTERPRETATION FOR TEACHER AND EXPLANATIONS OF PURPOSE FOR STUDNETS***

***Key Concept #1: All media are carefully wrapped packages***.

As carefully wrapped packages, the messages are “wrapped” with enormous

effort andexpense, even though they appear quite natural to the audience.

Media texts are theproduct of careful manipulation of constructive elements, both on an obvious and a subtlelevel. On an obvious level, constructions such as drawings, colors, and headlines may beused. But on a subtle level, constructions such as appeals (generalization

appeal or appeal to emotion) may be used.

 **Students need to develop skills of looking beneath the surface of media messages to see how they are constructed**.

***Key Concept #2: Media construct versions of reality.***

Audiencestend to accept media texts as natural versions of events and ideas, when, infact, they are only representations of events andideas. The reality we see in media text is a constructed reality, built for us by the people who made the media text.

**Students need to develop skills of interpreting texts so that they can tell thedifference between reality and textual versions of reality.**

**Key Concept #3: Media are interpreted through individual lenses**.

Audiences interact with media texts in idiosyncratic ways. Some audiences accept somemessage totally at face value. Other audiences may reject the same text, disagree withits message, or find it objectionable. Yet other audiences, not certain if they have embraced or rejected the text, will try to come to terms with it by negotiating. Audienceswho negotiate with a text might ask questions, seek out other people’s opinions, or trydifferent interpretations or reactions the way people try on new clothes-- to see how theysuit the wearer. Students need to be open to multipleinterpretations of texts and aware that a reaction to a text is a product of both the text itselfand all that the audience brings to the text in terms of their accumulated life experiences.

**Key Concept #4: Media are about money.**

1.Modern media are expensive to produce. Producers need to make back their investment by marketing their product to audiences.

2.One of the chief purposes of media is to promote consumerism. While we enjoy manyof the products of media, such as magazines, we need to be aware that some mediatexts are created to deliver an audience to advertisers rather than to deliver texts toaudiences. Others may use consumerism as a secondary motive.

3.With increasing regularity, four or five massive communication sconglomerates dominate media production facilities like newspaper/book/magazine publishers andTV/film production and distribution companies. Students need tobe aware of the implications of the media’s commercial agenda, and how “convergence” affects the media and their contents.

**Key Concept #5: Media promote agenda.**

Thevery fact that some people object to some media texts is evidence that those textscontain value messages. Most media texts are targeted for an audience that can beidentified by its values or ideology (belief system). Detecting the ideological and values agenda of media texts is an important skill in mass communication analysis