

CS0931: Introduction to Computation for the Humanities and Social Sciences

Anna Ritz

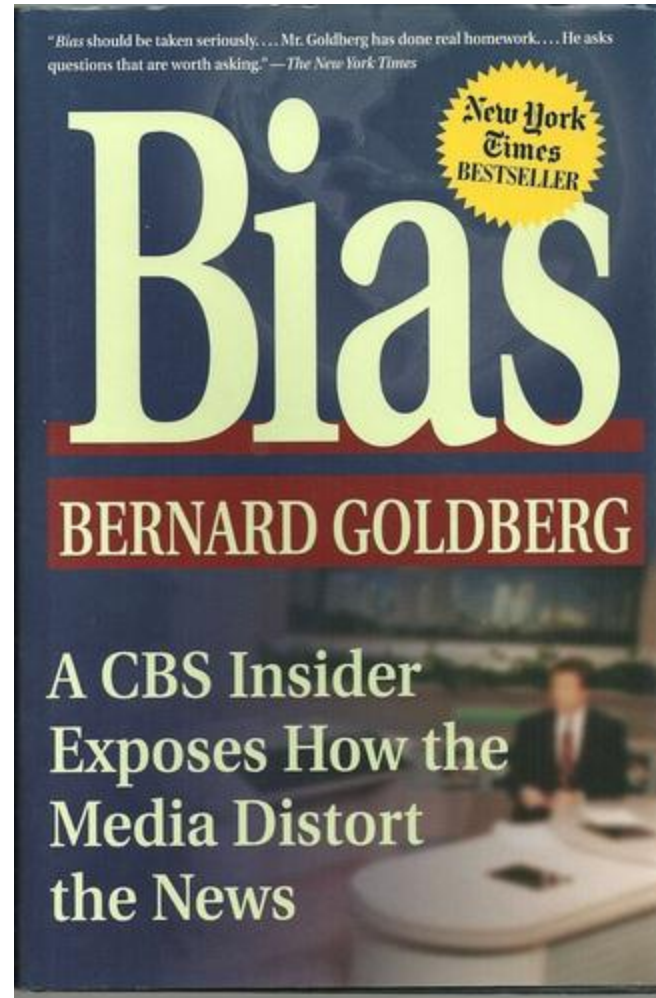
Liberal Media Bias

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“Liberal bias in the media occurs when liberal ideas have undue influence on the coverage or selection of news stories.”

- Wikipedia

Bias: A CBS Insider Exposes How the Media Distort the News.
Bernard Goldberg, 2001.



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I noticed that we pointedly identified conservatives as conservatives, for example, but for some crazy reason we didn't bother to identify liberals as liberals...in the world of the Jenningses and Brokaws and Rathers, conservatives are out of the mainstream and need to be identified. Liberals, on the other hand, *are* the mainstream and don't need to be identified.”

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Somewhere in here is a testable hypothesis: *What is it?*

Claim: In the media, conservatives are labeled as “conservative” more often than liberals are labeled as “liberal.”

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We need to figure out a way to test this hypothesis.

Define
Problem

Find Data



snfblog.com

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What does it mean
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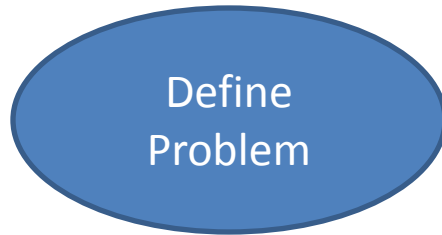
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Conservatives



1. Dick Cheney
(Former VP)
2. Rush Limbaugh
(Talk radio)
3. Matt Drudge
(*Drudge Report*)
4. Sarah Palin
(AK Gov.)
5. Robert Gates
(Defense Sec.)



Liberals

1. Barack Obama
(President)
2. Hillary Clinton
(Sec. of State)
3. Nancy Pelosi
(Speaker of H.)
4. Bill Clinton
(Former Pres.)
5. Rahm Emanuel
(Chicago Mayor)



“The Most Influential US Conservatives & US Liberals.” The Telegraph, Jan 2010

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/northamerica/usa/6990965/The-most-influential-US-conservatives-20-1.html>

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/northamerica/usa/6991000/The-most-influential-US-liberals-20-1.html>

How long would it take you to count for an entire newspaper?

20 Pages

8 columns/page

6 paragraphs/column

40 words/paragraph

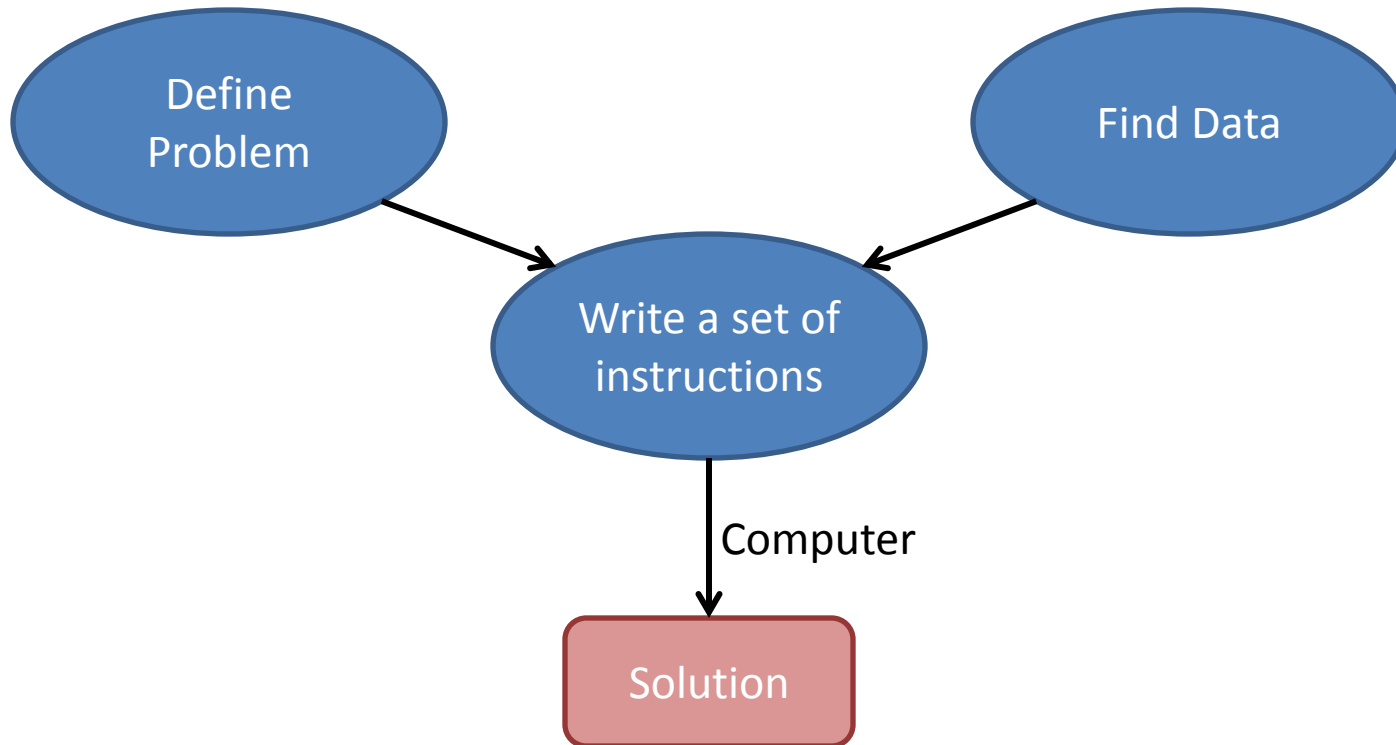
= 38,400 words in a newspaper

If you read 250 words per minute, $38,400 / 250 = 153.6$
minutes

Word count of NYTimes front-page articles: **12,496**
(45 double-spaced pages)

<http://ask.metafilter.com/18970/How-many-words-on-the-front-page>


Goal: use computers to answer these types of questions



“On the Bias.” Geoffrey Nunberg, on NPR’s *Fresh Air*

Things to think about:

- What decisions/assumptions did Nunberg make?
- How did he justify his assumptions?
- What are potential criticisms?



Define
Problem



Find Data

Break

About the Course

Everything you need will be on the website:

<http://www.cs.brown.edu/courses/cs0931/index.shtml>

Read “About CS0931” and the Course Missive

Fill out the Collaboration Policy

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- Analyzing Texts using Python

Weekly Homeworks

Two Unit Projects, One Final Project

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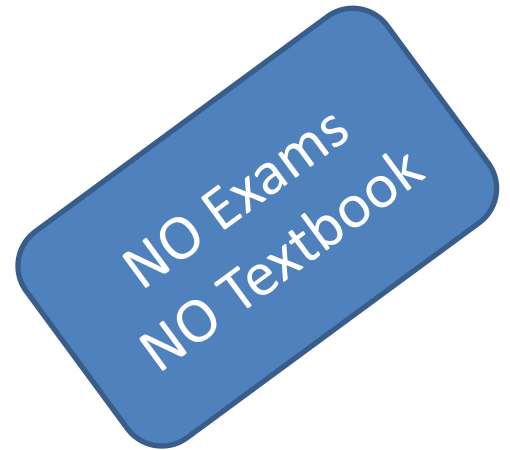
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You'll Have Help



Instructor: Anna Ritz



Faculty: Tom Doeppner



Steve Reiss



Spike Hughes
(On sabbatical)



Shriram Krishnamurthi
(On sabbatical)

You'll Have Even More Help



Head TA: Maria (Gabby) Suarez



Tas: Flora Jin



Jeanette Miranda



Jonah Kagan



Ruth Simmons

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Jadrian Miles



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Odds & Ends

Flash drive will be useful

You will be able to do all homeworks/projects on a PC and most homeworks on a Mac

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Always be thinking about problems, data sources, etc. Your projects will benefit from it.