

Public Abstract

First Name:Annee

Middle Name:Suzanne

Last Name:Tousseau

Adviser's First Name:Wayne

Adviser's Last Name:Wanta

Co-Adviser's First Name:

Co-Adviser's Last Name:

Graduation Term:SS 2009

Department:Journalism

Degree:MA

Title:Framing the Writers Strike: A Comparison of Newspaper Coverage of the 2007-2008 Writers Guild of America Strike

In November 2007, the Writers Guild of America, the labor union representing U.S. film, television and radio writers, called a strike targeted at the Alliance of Motion Picture and Television Producers, a trade association representing over 350 entertainment production companies. Eventually over 12,000 writers joined the strike, which ended in February 2008. Production on many television programs ceased, which made this strike immediately visible to a large number of Americans – the national television audience. Informed by a critical theory perspective and guided by the principles of qualitative textual analysis, this study examines framing of the strike in three major newspapers: the New York Times, the Wall Street Journal and the New York Post. The Post’s and the Journal’s mutual parent company, News Corporation, had a financial stake in the strike; it owns the Fox television networks and film production studios, and is represented by the alliance. The New York Times’s parent company, in contrast, did not have a stake in the strike. The results show that though the three newspapers used different assortments of frames to cover the strike, they all framed it negatively – by emphasizing “damage” caused by the strike, promoting consumer values and marginalizing the guild. Ultimately, this study affirms the literature describing media coverage of labor, and furthers the understanding of the relationship between media ownership and content.