

Investigative Journalism in Mainstream Pop Culture (and Real Life!):

All the President's Men & Spotlight, or "Alaska Daily"

For this assignment, you are required to do one of two things:

- 1.) Read articles about both the [Watergate scandal](#) that forced the resignation of President Richard Nixon in 1974, and the [Catholic Church sex abuse scandal](#) (read the first story from Jan. 6, 2002) in Boston.

After reading these articles to learn about the basis and outcomes of these scandals, you must watch two movies: [All the President's Men](#) (1976) and [Spotlight](#) (2015). These films are available to borrow at the McMahan Center, HBO Max, Amazon Prime (to rent) and Hulu.

...OR...

You will then write a 3- to 5-page paper (double spaced) in which you do the following:

- Identify and describe the investigative reporting techniques of each of these teams (what did the reporters do to find the story? What public documents did they have to obtain, and how did they access them? What *private* documents did they have to access? How did they get those? Who did the reporters interview and how did those interviews verify the information in the docs? – think triangulation, here),
- What do you notice about how the journalists interview people? What kinds of questions do they ask?
- Describe the hurdles the reporting teams had to jump. How did they overcome them?
- Identify and describe the ethical and/or personal dilemmas the teams faced,
- Identify and describe what you found to be impressive about both investigations. In the movies, both of these projects won Pulitzer Prizes and truly changed the course of American history. (Do you find any of the reporting techniques to be problematic, ethically or practically? What still perplexes you about the investigations?) For the TV drama, what did you find to be interesting, perplexing, challenging?
- Describe what you learned from watching these movies or the series about the cases, the reporting and journalism itself.

To get an A on this project, you must:

- Follow the directions,
- Answer the questions thoroughly and thoughtfully,
- Tie things you have learned in this course to the reporting techniques you see in the films,
- Use proper AP style (no joke – I find this to be critically important),
- Have a well-edited, clean paper (spelling, grammar, punctuation – GET NAMES SPELLED CORRECTLY. You have access to Google, so use it.)
- **BE ON TIME. This is due via Blackboard no later than 11:59 p.m., SUNDAY, APRIL 16.**