WHO WILL TELL US? P. 4: What do you think is the main reason why the accuracy rate of political reporting has plummeted to “new lows”? How might layoffs and buyouts in newsrooms affect the course of the general election? Why do you think there are seemingly more pundits than there are reporters on television? Would you prefer to be a pundit or a reporter? Explain. Will the Huffington Post “reinvent the American newspaper”? Why or why not? Should the American newspaper be reinvented? If not, why not? If so, how would you reinvent it? ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES: Watch two or three news talk programs. Listen carefully to the pundits and list the sources they cite to back up their opinions. Locate and read the source material. Are the pundits accurately relaying what was reported? What is “conventional wisdom”? Who determines what it is? Find on-the-ground newspaper reports from the most recent primary campaigns. Does the reporting support or buck conventional wisdom? Explain.
LOST MEDIA, FOUND MEDIA, PP. 30-34: Comment on how Alissa Quart categorizes Lost Media and Found Media. Do you agree with her definitions? Why or why not? How do members of Lost Media and Found Media differ in their attitudes toward journalism? Which group do you find more attractive in terms of your own future? Explain. As the editorial notes, print and electronic media are cutting back on reporters. How will that affect the future of Found Media? Are we as a society benefitting from the zooming popularity of blogging? Why or why not? According to Quart, members of Lost Media must try to “learn or steal” what they can from Found Media. Like what, for example? Would we be better off with the scenario imagined by Quart on page 34, where journalists ply their trade for free with fame or notoriety as payment? Comment on David Cohn’s heroes (p. 34). Who are yours? Why? ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES: List the strengths and weaknesses of Lost Media and Found Media. Which do you think will ultimately prevail? Why? Write an essay that imagines a conversation between a Lost Media-ite and a Found Media-ite. Let the conversation be as focused or as far-ranging as you choose on a subject or subjects also of your choosing.

THE FUTURE OF READING, PP. 35-40: What are the benefits and drawbacks of e-book readers from the points of view of authors and readers? Have you ever tried a Kindle or another e-book reader? If so, what did you like and not like about it? What does Ezra Klein like about e-book readers in general? Do you agree? Do they represent the future of reading? Why or why not? If you were an author, would you prefer to have your book released electronically or on paper? Explain. ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES: Download a copy of the National Endowment for the Arts report, “To Read or Not to Read.” Discuss its implications for journalism. Suggest solutions to remedy the problems raised in the report.

SHOP STEWARDS, PP. 55-57: Weigh the benefits and drawbacks of Der Spiegel’s ownership model. Would you like to work at a magazine that operated the same way? Why or why not? ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES: Read the latest issue of Der Spiegel online. Critique it, and compare it to the major American newswEEKLYs. Find out whether there were similar employee-owned and operated journalistic efforts in the United States. Were they successes or failures? Why?

THE DEVIL IN THE DETAILS, PP. 18-20, LOVE THY NEIGHBOR, PP. 48-52: Contrast the different views of the Christian right movement in the two stories. What do both stories have to say about the best way to cover religion? Do you agree or disagree? What do they say about stereotypes and pre-conceived notions? Both stories discuss how polarized the country is around the subject of religion and its relationship to secular society. What do you think are the reasons for it? Is it the role of the journalist to reduce the polarization? If not, why not? If so, how? ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES: Imagine you have been asked to create a beat on your newspaper that would cover religion, the Christian right and other activist religious groups. Write a memo laying out how you view the beat and how you would cover it. Suggest five in-depth stories you’d like to do.