Modes of Influence: Agenda-setting power

- Media tells us what is important and prioritizes things through repetition, tell us what to think about
- Occurs when media focuses on certain issues and avoid others
- When they frequently discuss issues, there is increased public awareness of those issues, but not a uniform public opinion
- Tells you not what to think, but what to think about

Bathtubs more dangerous than terrorists

Modes of Influence: Frames

- Basic cognitive structures inherent to all human “thinking”, enable people to construct meaning out of complex events
- Use of specific language and metaphors that give stories and implicit causal logic
- Allows certain interpretations of events, but rules out others (tax relief, war on terrorism)
- Everything is always spun/frame

Representations of Mainstream Media

- Dominant ideology is reflected in media messages
- Members of disadvantaged groups within society are under-represented in the media (quantity – just don’t see them as much)
- Misrepresentation is usually stereotypical and negative (qualitative – disadvantaged ones)

Representation of the Working Class

- Butsch researched domestic situation comedies (sitcoms) between 1946 and 1978
- 63.5% of domestic sitcoms were about middle class and only 8.4% were about working class, but in real life, people were 28.7% middle and 65% working
- Then studied representations of working class vs. middle class men
- Working class men were the dumb ones (ineptitude, immaturity, stupidity, lack of good sense, emotional outburst), women and children had to help them, comedy