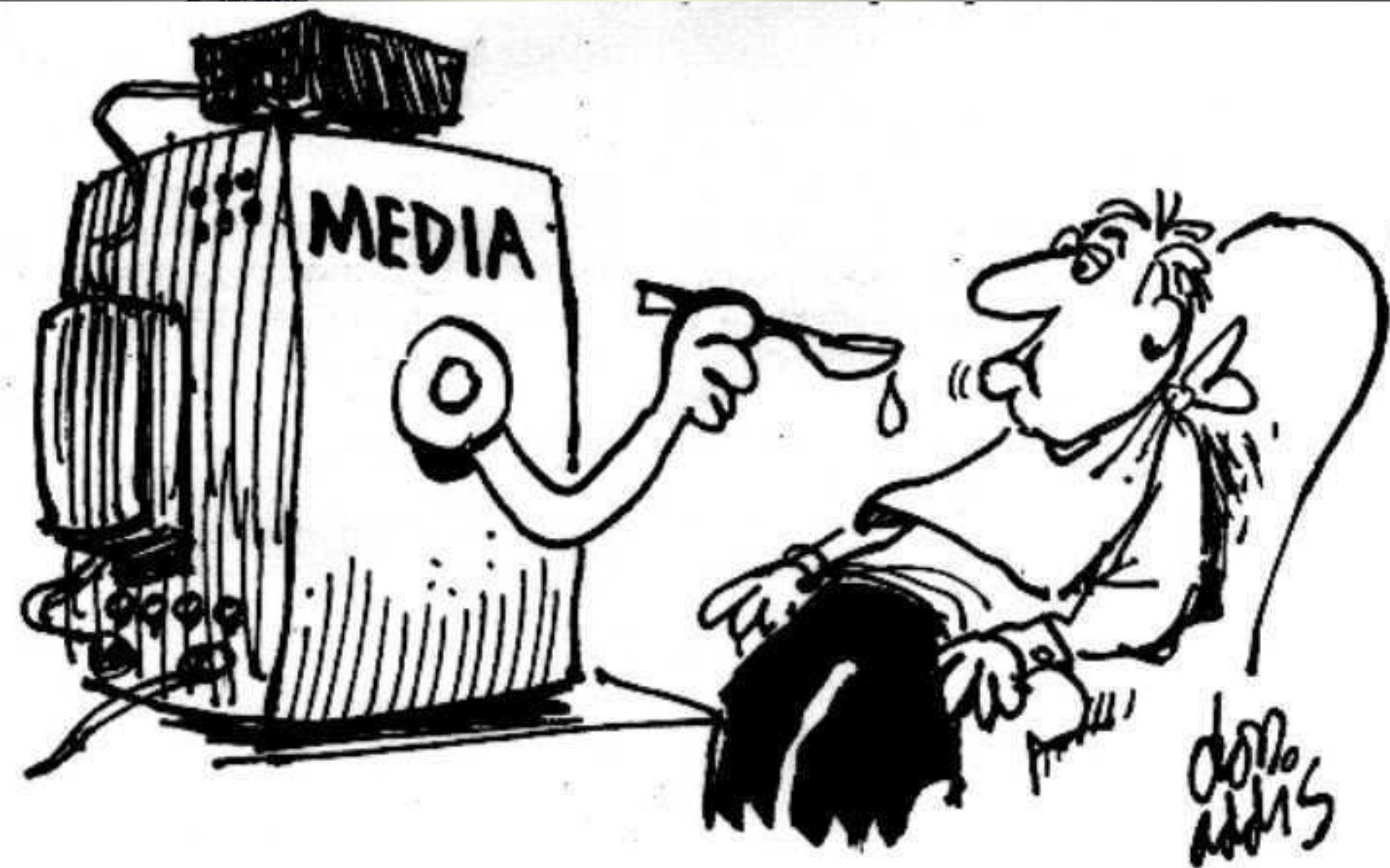





The Mass Media and the Political Agenda

AP UNIT TWO (Continued)

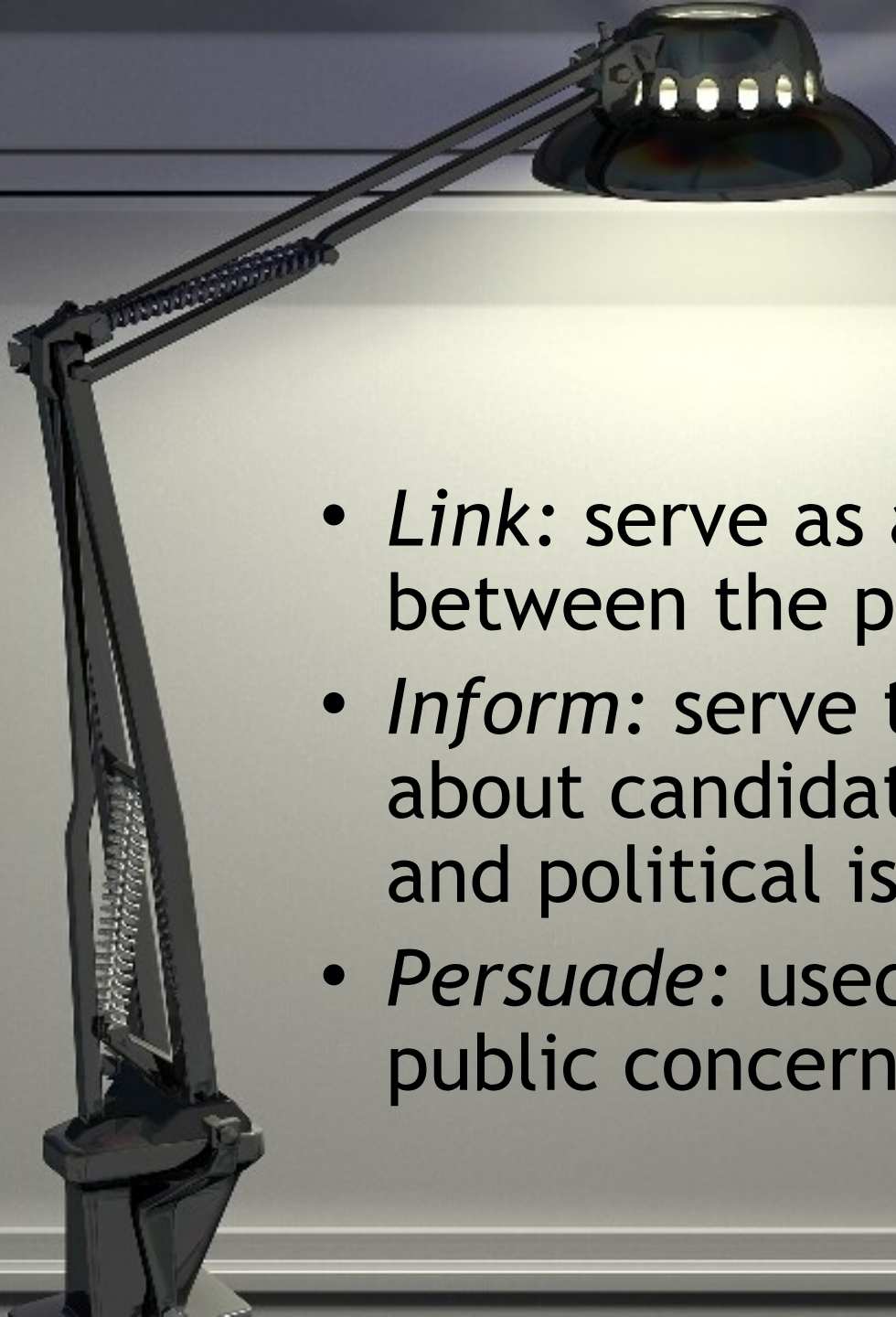


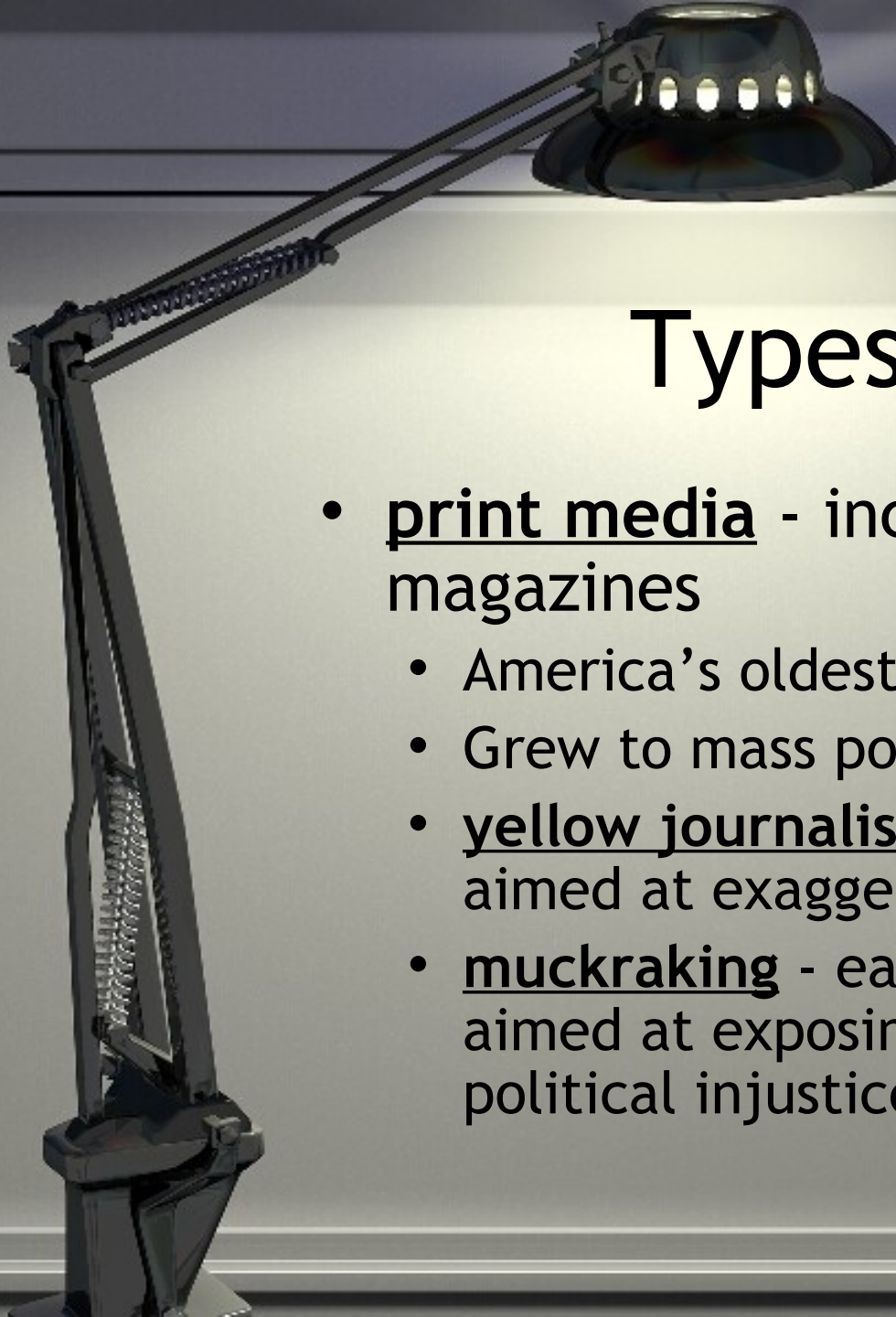
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- mass media - forms of communication that can reach a large audience at a given time
 - high-tech politics - technology increasingly influences political behaviors and agendas



Purposes of the Mass Media

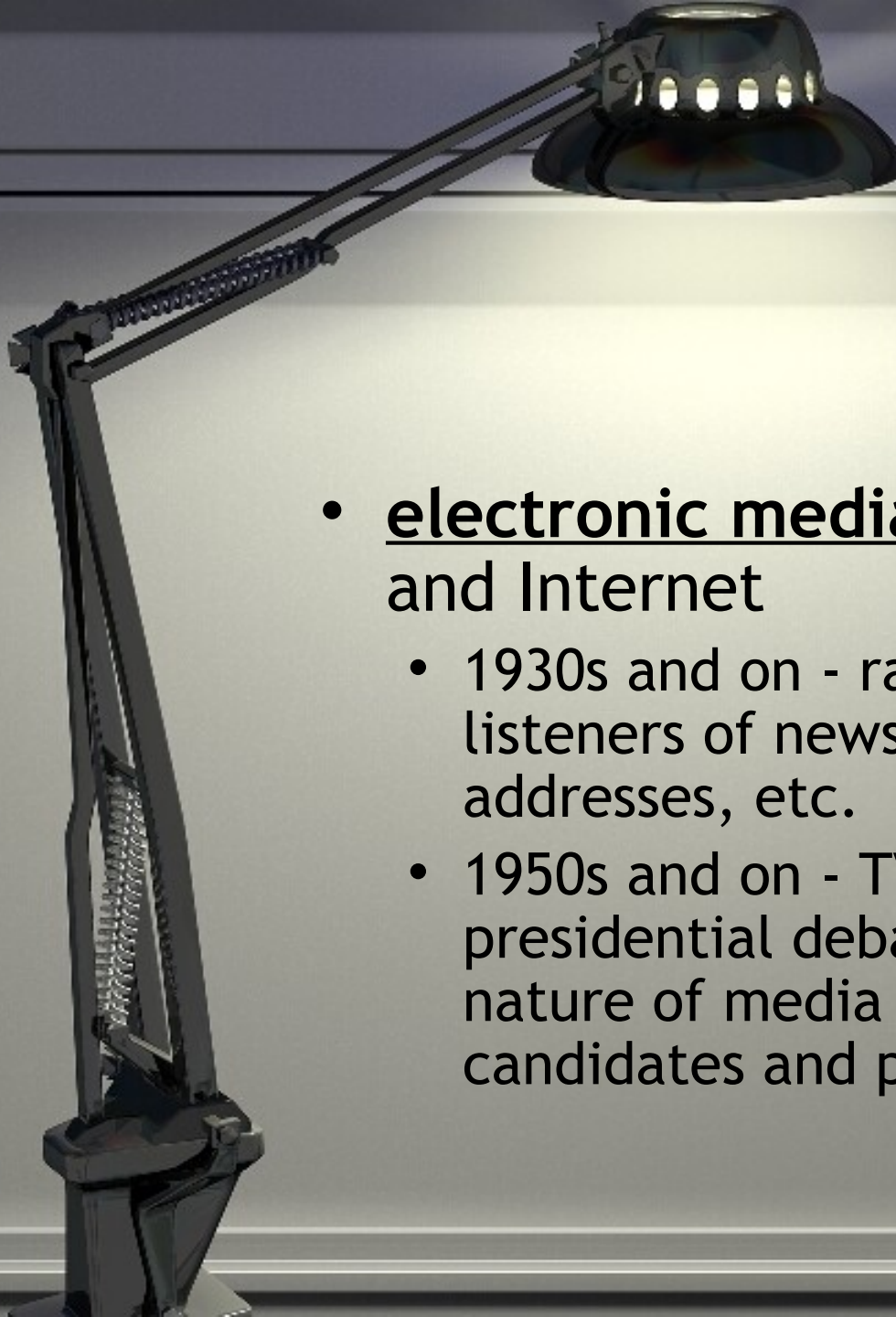
- *Broadcast: media events* - political events created specifically for media coverage (ex: presidential debates)
- *Investigate: investigative journalism* - in-depth questionings of politicians' statements

- 
- *Link*: serve as a linkage institution between the people and gov't
 - *Inform*: serve to teach the public about candidates, public policies, and political issues
 - *Persuade*: used to influence the public concerning political issues



Types of Media

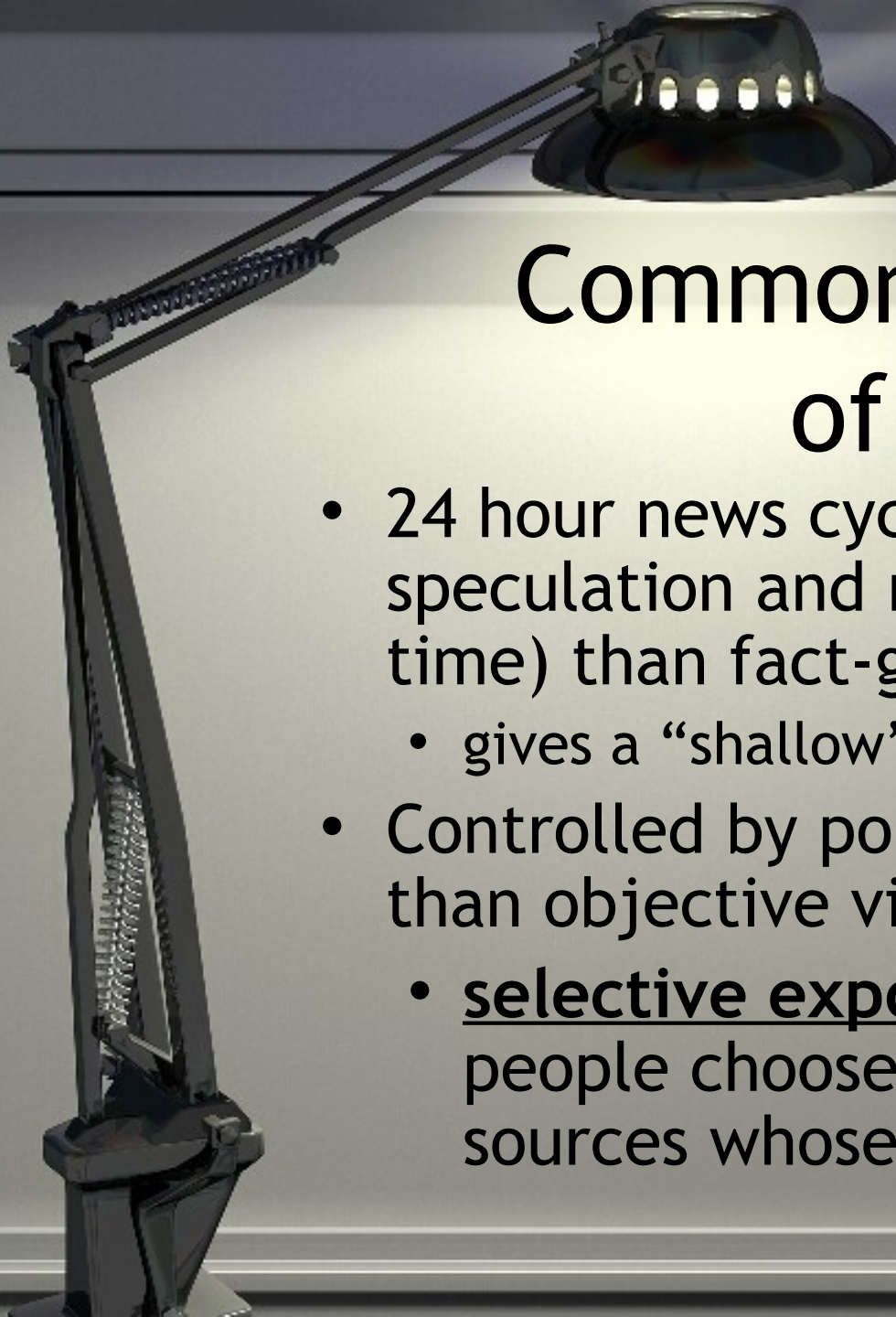
- print media - includes newspapers and magazines
 - America's oldest form of mass media
 - Grew to mass popularity during 19th century
 - yellow journalism - sensationalist media aimed at exaggerating facts
 - muckraking - early investigative journalism aimed at exposing social, economic, and political injustices and corruption

- 
- **electronic media** - includes radio, TV, and Internet
 - 1930s and on - radio serves to inform listeners of news, hosts presidential addresses, etc.
 - 1950s and on - TV begins broadcasting news, presidential debates, etc. - changes the nature of media by giving a video visual of candidates and political events



TV and the Rise of Cable

- narrowcasting - media content aimed at a narrow audience, unlike broadcasting
 - Ex: ESPN for sports fans, C-SPAN for political people
 - The specialties of cable encourage this approach toward getting information: people pick what interests them

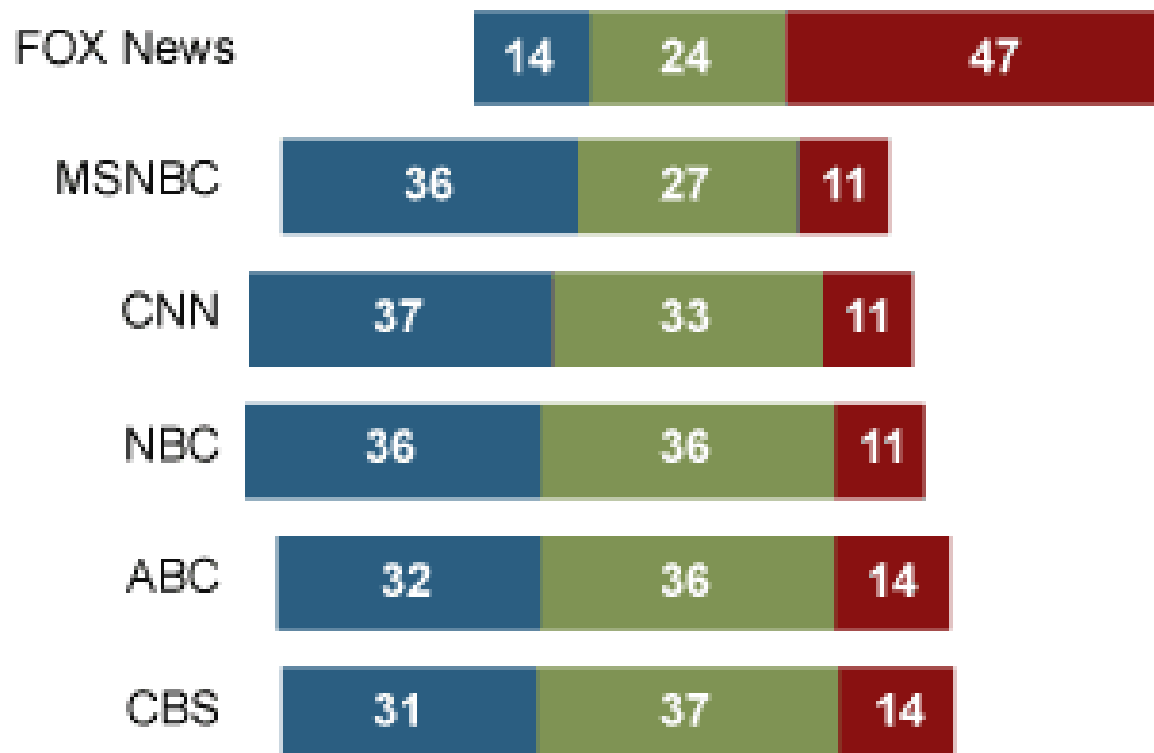


Common Criticisms of Cable

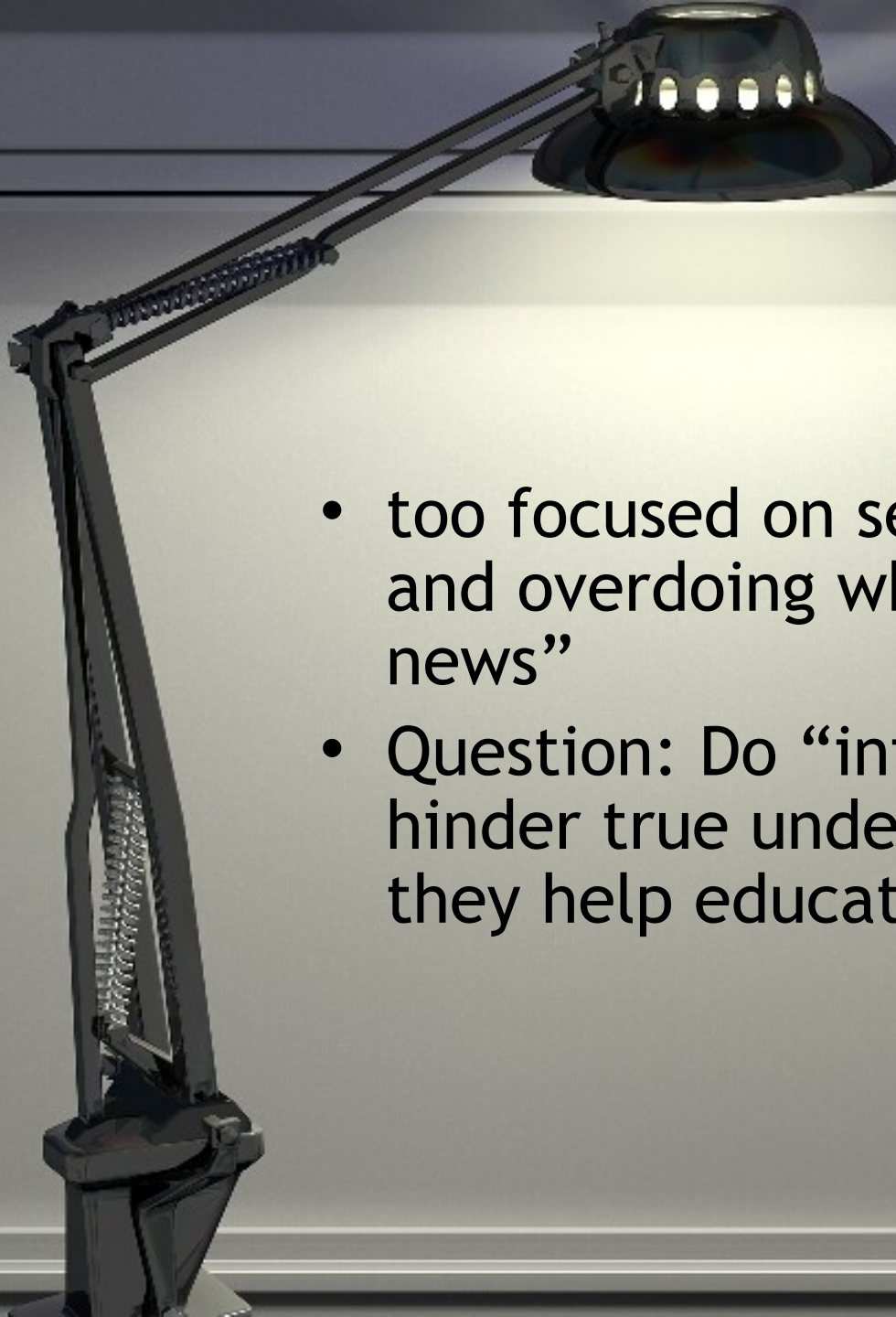
- 24 hour news cycle: focused more on speculation and repetition (to fill up time) than fact-giving
 - gives a “shallow” view of news
- Controlled by political ideologies rather than objective viewpoints:
 - selective exposure: process by which people choose to get news from sources whose views match their own

Public Perceptions of News Network Ideology

Mostly liberal Neither Mostly conservative



Q6a-f. "Don't know" responses not shown.

- 
- too focused on sensationalism, arguing, and overdoing whatever is “breaking news”
 - Question: Do “infotainment” shows hinder true understanding of gov’t? Do they help educate the public?



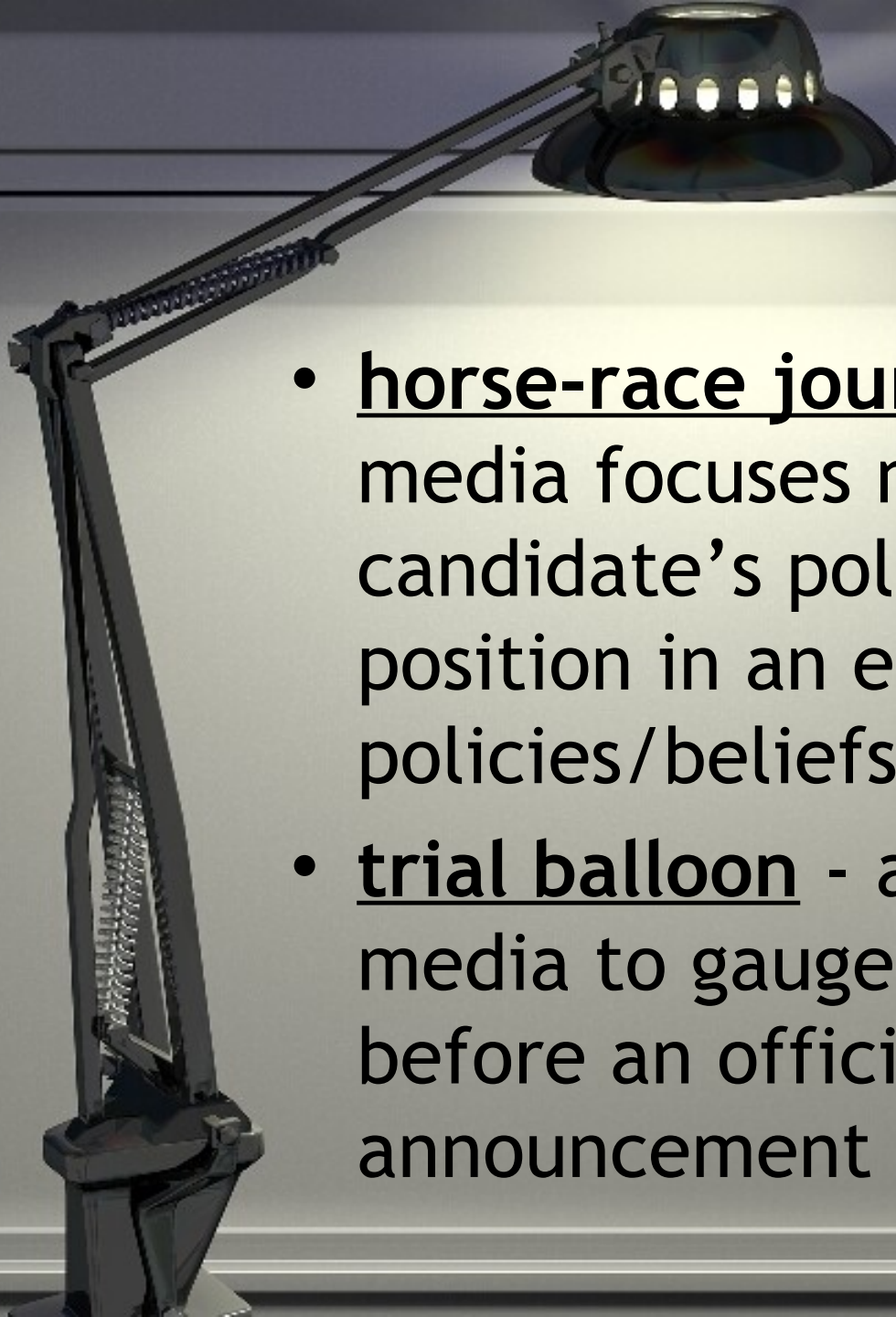
The Internet

- Newest addition to mass media: contains broader array of knowledge than ever before
- Not largely used by public for political learning (only 0.12% traffic to political sites!)
- Used more for communication/discussion about politics (ex: blogs, social media, etc.)



Reporting the News

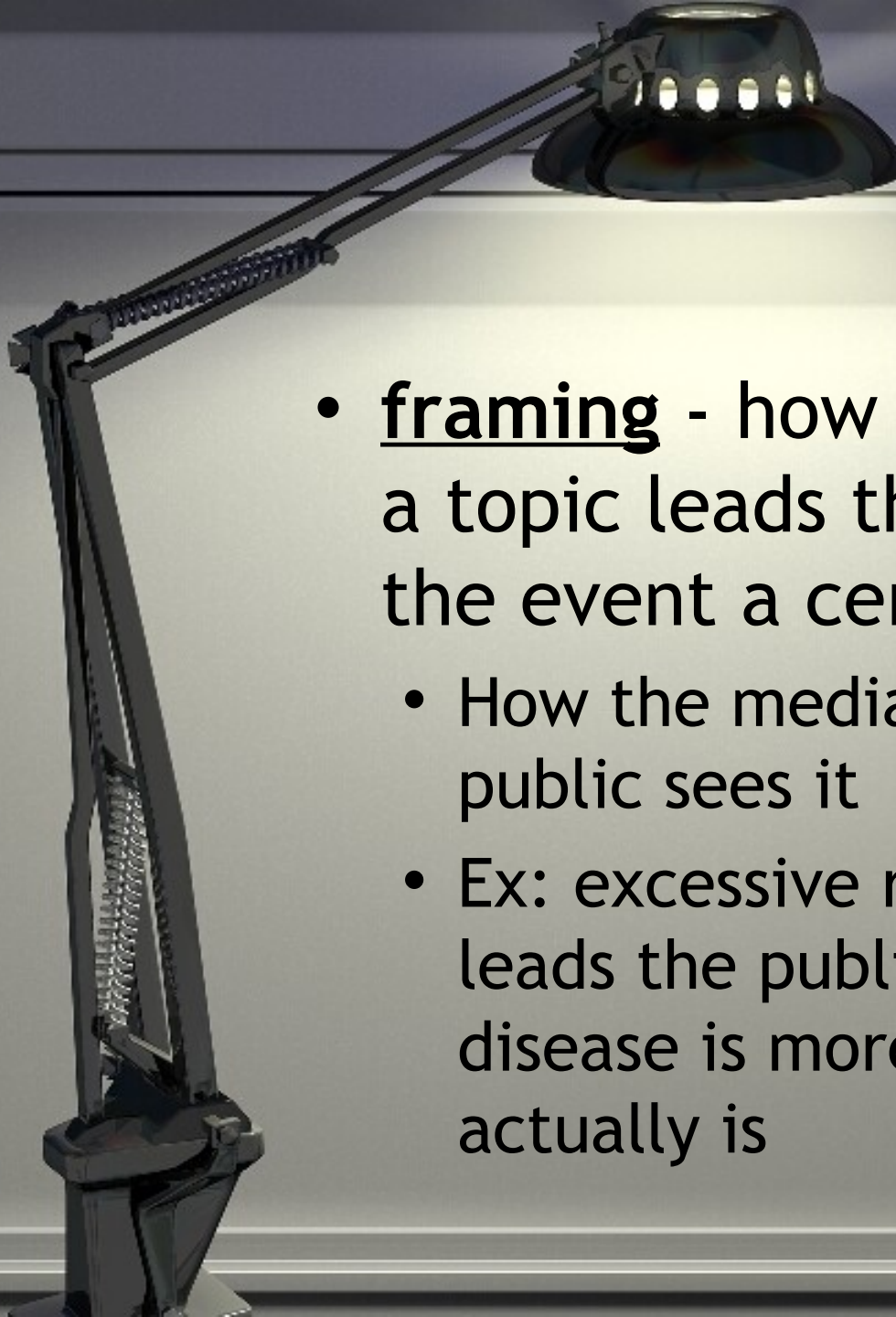
- News is usually presented in a shallow-summary format, focused on the most interesting parts of a story
- sound bites - clips of 10 seconds or less of a politician's speech
 - cannot give in-depth view of their policies or ideas
- talking head - a view from the neck up of a person talking (can also refer to pundits - experts who analyze politics)


- 
- horse-race journalism - when the media focuses more on a candidate's polling numbers/ position in an election than on their policies/beliefs
 - trial balloon - an info “leak” to the media to gauge public opinion before an official political announcement

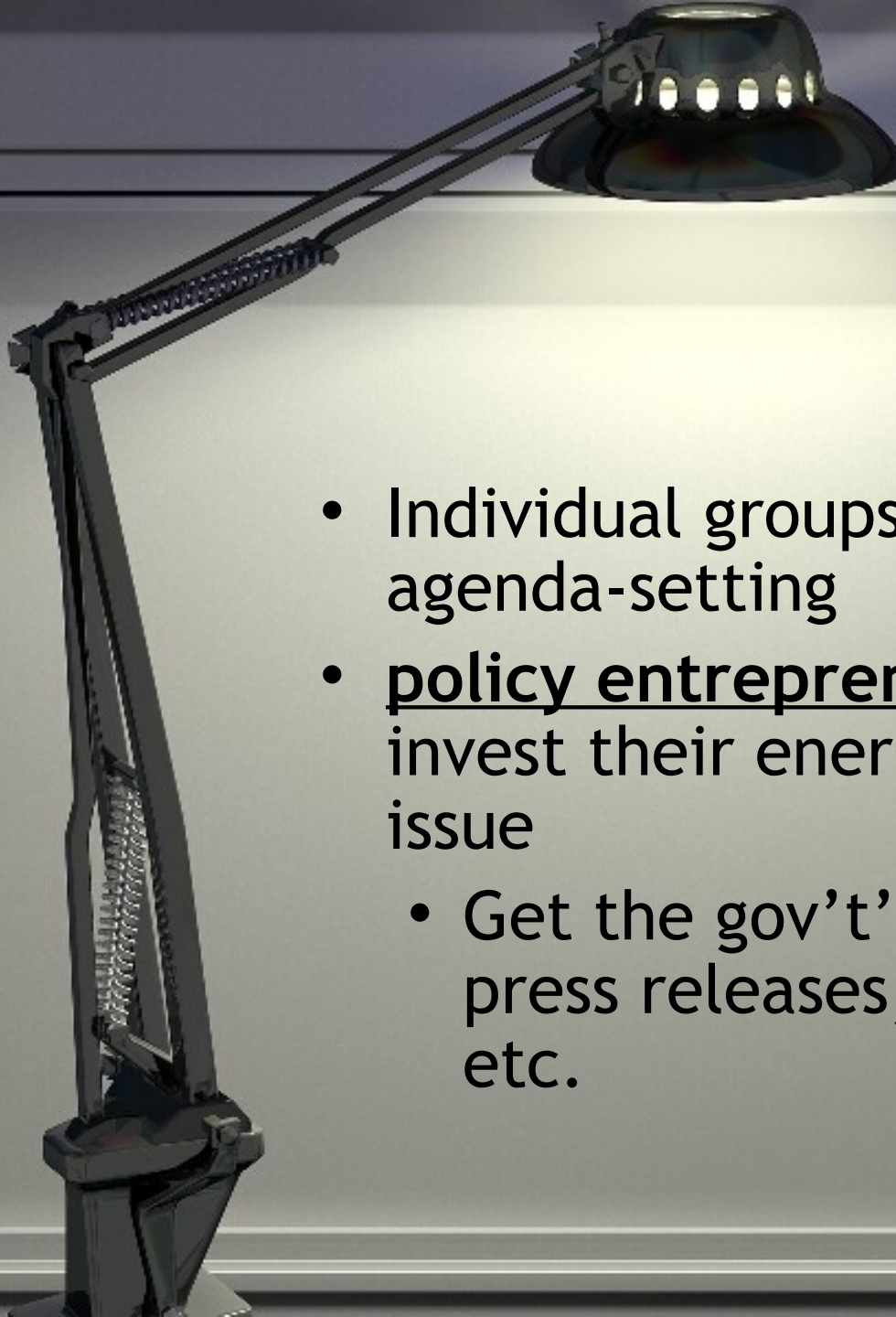


Mass Media and Public Opinion

- priming - media discussion of a topic prepares the public to question/consider things about a candidate
 - Ex: media reports on gun control; public considers what kinds of guns a candidate has

- 
- framing - how the media reports on a topic leads the public to interpret the event a certain way
 - How the media sees it = how the public sees it
 - Ex: excessive reporting on a disease leads the public to believe that the disease is more widespread than it actually is

- 
- agenda-setting effect - what the media reports on has the ability to shape political agenda
 - Picks and chooses what to report on and tells the public what's important
 - these topics become the public's priorities (and later, the gov't's)

- 
- Individual groups also shape media agenda-setting
 - policy entrepreneurs - people who invest their energy and priorities in an issue
 - Get the gov't's attention through press releases, media events, letters, etc.



Private Control of the Media

- U.S. media is owned by companies, not the gov't (but a few publicly owned)
- media consolidation - media is gradually being owned by fewer and fewer companies
- Thus, coverage across different sources is generally becoming more and more similar (less differentiation of news)

1

CONSOLIDATION

1983



In 1983, 90% of American media was owned by **50 companies**

2011



In 2011, that same 90% is controlled by **6 companies**

THESE SIX COMPANIES ARE:



GE

Notable Properties:

COMCAST
NBC
UNIVERSAL PICTURES
FOCUS FEATURES



NEWS-CORP

Notable Properties:

FOX
WALL STREET JOURNAL
NEW YORK POST



DISNEY

Notable Properties:

ABC
ESPN
PIXAR
MIRAMAX
MARVEL STUDIOS



VIACOM

Notable Properties:

MTV
NICK JR
BET
CMT
PARAMOUNT PICTURES



TIME WARNER

Notable Properties:

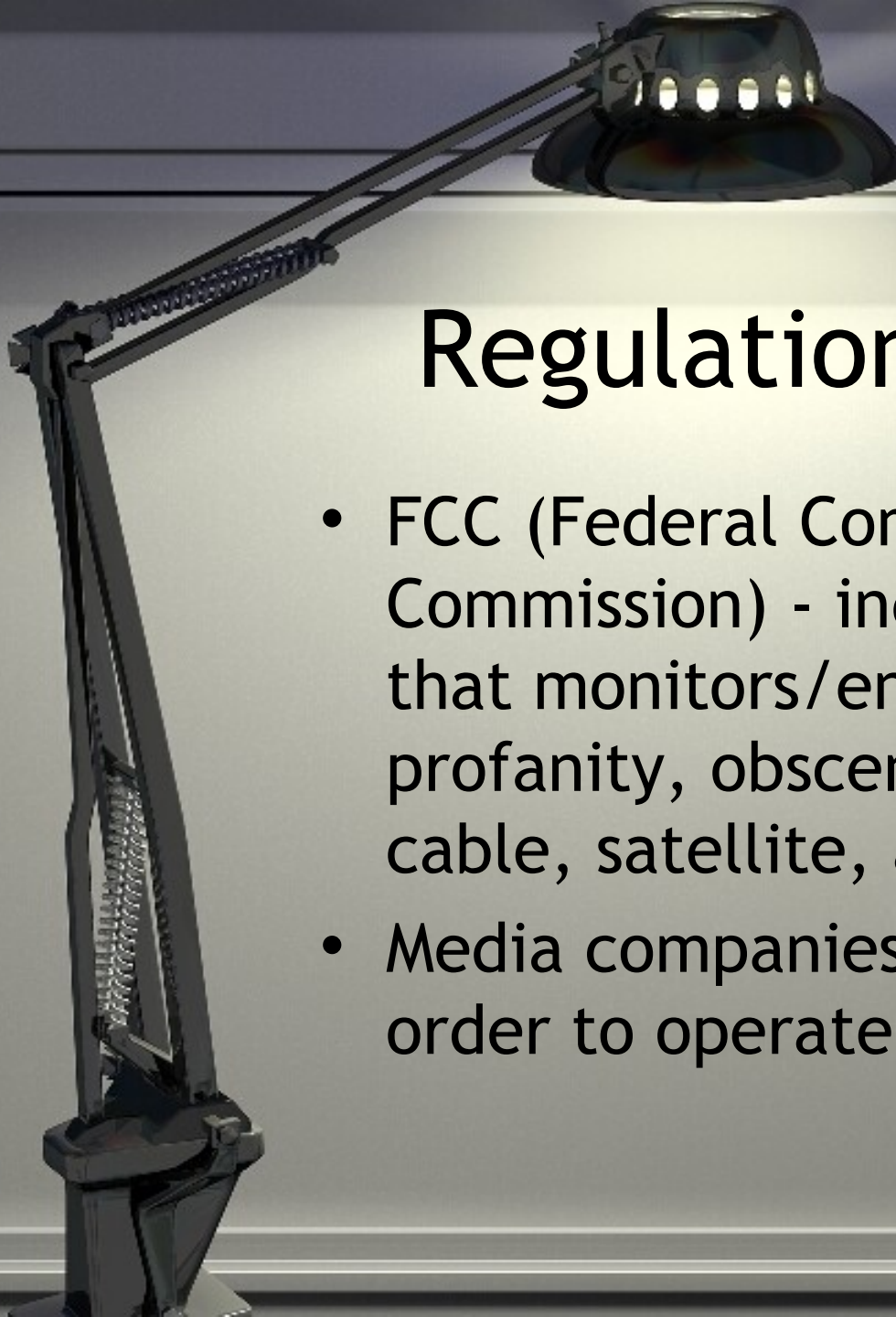
CNN
HBO
TIME
WARNER BROS



CBS

Notable Properties:

SHOWTIME
SMITHSONIAN CHANNEL
NFL.COM
JEOPARDY
60 MINUTES



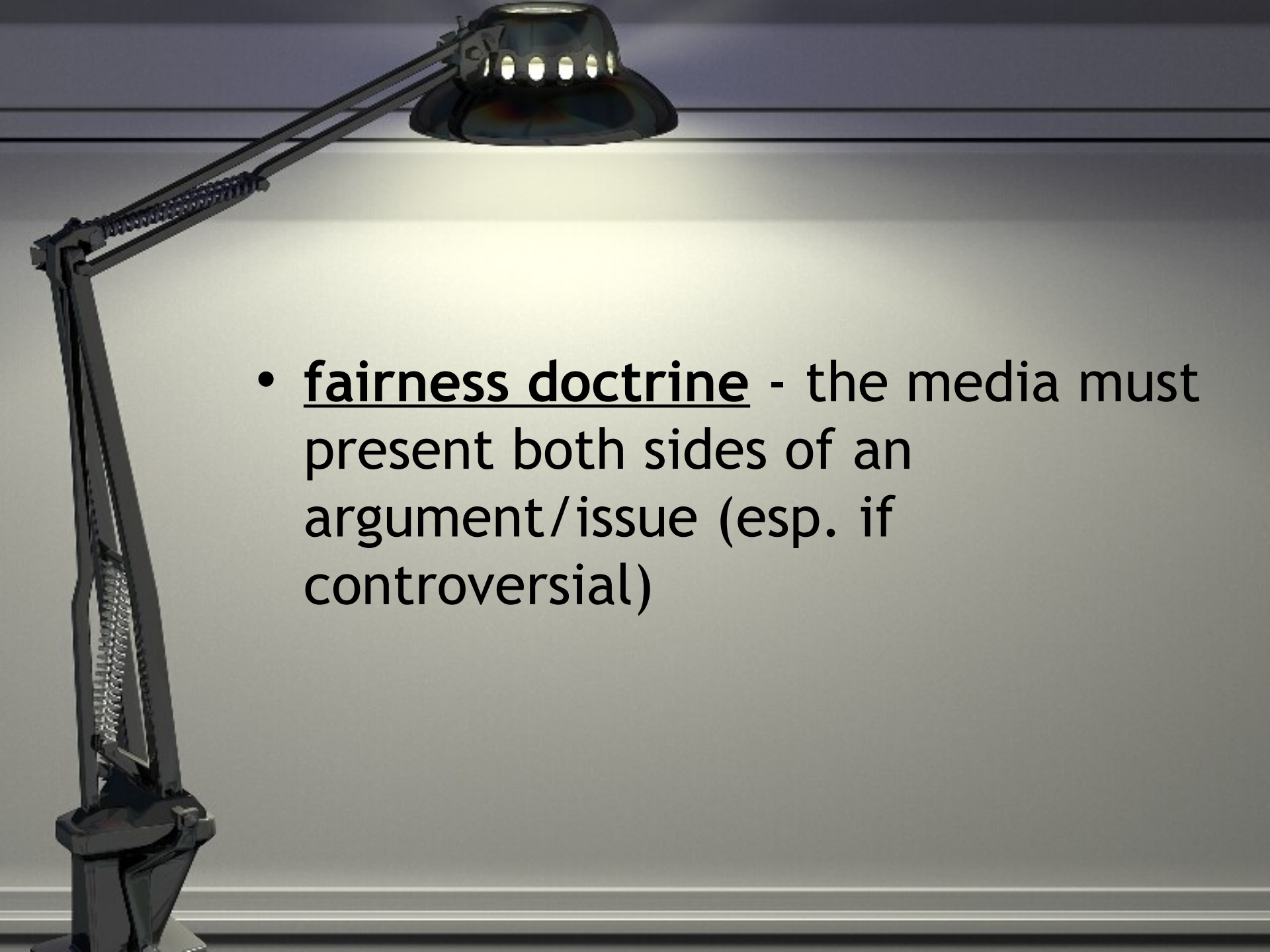
Regulation of the Media

- FCC (Federal Communications Commission) - independent gov't agency that monitors/enforces rules censoring profanity, obscenity, etc. on radio, TV, cable, satellite, and wire
- Media companies must be FCC licensed in order to operate



A few FCC rules...


- equal time rule - different candidates for the same office must have equal time to communicate their messages in the media
- right of rebuttal - candidates must be given a chance to address personal attacks

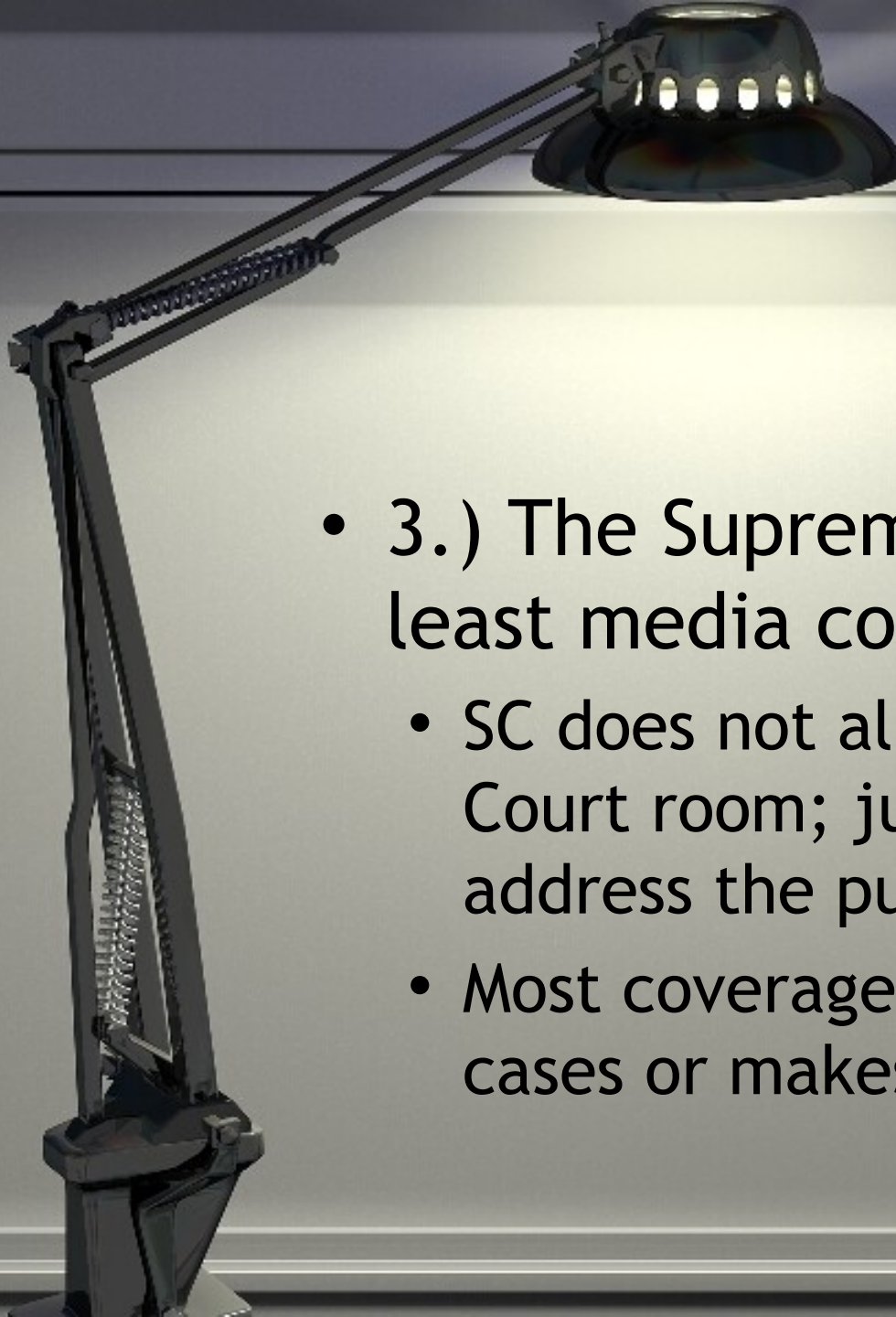
- 
- A black desk lamp with a silver-colored adjustable arm and a black base is positioned on the left side of the frame. The lamp's head is tilted upwards, casting a bright, circular pool of light onto a light gray wall. The wall has a subtle horizontal line near the top. The lamp's arm is extended, and its base is visible at the bottom left corner. The overall scene is dimly lit, with the primary light source being the desk lamp.
- fairness doctrine - the media must present both sides of an argument/issue (esp. if controversial)



Media Attention and the Gov't

- 1.) The president gets the most media coverage - 65% (ex: press conferences, addresses, State of the Union, etc.)
 - Uses media the most to communicate policies to the American public (media press corps to follow president's movements)
 - one person = easier to follow in news
 - people look to president as the leader of the country especially in times of crisis

- 
- Congress gets the second-most media coverage (29%)
 - especially big legislation being passed, Senate confirmations, investigations, and important hearings
 - larger body of people = a little harder to follow in the news

- 
- 3.) The Supreme Court gets the least media coverage of gov't (6%)
 - SC does not allow cameras in the Court room; justices hardly ever address the public
 - Most coverage when SC accepts big cases or makes landmark decisions