This project presented the media portrayals of Pope Benedict XVI and Pope Francis. It examined theories of media impact on media consumers, and applied these to media coverage of the Popes and perceptions of Catholicism in America.

Media Coverage of Pope Benedict XVI

- Most media covered stories:
  - His world travels
  - Catholic priest abuse scandal
  - Resignation
- Characterization:
  - Intellectual
  - Conservative
  - “Prada Pope”

Media Coverage of Pope Francis

- In the media much more frequently
- Media covered stories
  - His world trips
  - Controversial issues
- Characterization:
  - Friendly
  - Liberal
  - “The People’s Pope”

This research demonstrates how the media attempts to manipulate the image of the Pope into a specific character. As seen above, Pope Benedict XVI and Pope Francis are viewed equally after their respective trips to the US.