**COMMUNICATION 449:**
**PERSPECTIVES ON THE NETWORKED PRESS**

Annenberg School for Communication & Journalism  
University of Southern California  
[Spring 2015]

**MEETINGS**  
Tuesdays, 2pm-4:50pm | ANN-211

**INSTRUCTOR**

Mike Ananny, PhD  
Assistant Professor  
Annenberg School for Communication & Journalism  
[http://mike.ananny.org](http://mike.ananny.org)  
ananny@usc.edu  
@ananny

**Office Hours:** Wednesdays, 4:30-6pm (or email for appointment)  
**Office Location:** ANN-310B

*There are no required books to purchase. All readings are provided through Blackboard.*

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

The work of journalism—the production, consumption, circulation, critique, and funding of news—is not housed within any single set of organizations, professions, or values (and it never really was). Today, the work of journalism is distributed among a new set of actors who, together, constitute what might be called the “networked press.” But we’re only beginning to understand the shape, function, and study of this type of press.

Intended for senior undergraduates and graduate students in Communication and Journalism, this course discusses how and why news emerges from networked institutions and sociotechnical systems. It situates contemporary debates about the press in historical contexts; reviews professional traditions and organizational routines of news production; discusses how and why presses and publics intersect; and helps students learn how to critique existing, experimental, and envisioned forms of networked journalism.

This class will be a chance for students to do three things: (1) read some foundational and emerging literature on how and why the networked press functions; (2) experiment with connecting this literature to contemporary examples of the networked press (technologies, organizations, journalism practices); (3) craft critiques of the networked press grounded in examples and theories. Each week we will examine systems, institutions, events, or organizations relevant to the networked press, and practice developing conceptually grounded interpretations and critiques of how and why the networked press works as it seems to.
INSTRUCTOR BIOGRAPHY

Mike Ananny is an Assistant Professor at the University of Southern California’s Annenberg School for Communication & Journalism, Affiliated Faculty with USC’s Science, Technology and Society research cluster, and a Faculty Associate at Harvard’s Berkman Center for Internet & Society. He studies the public significance and sociotechnical dynamics of networked news systems. He has held fellowships and scholarships with Stanford’s Center on Philanthropy and Civil Society, the Pierre Elliott Trudeau Foundation, the LEGO Corporation, and Interval Research. He was a founding member of Media Lab Europe’s research staff, a postdoc with Microsoft Research’s Social Media Collective, and has worked or consulted for LEGO, Mattel, and Nortel Networks. His PhD is from Stanford University (Communication), SM from the MIT Media Lab (Media Arts & Sciences), and BSc from the University of Toronto (Human Biology & Computer Science). He has published in a variety of venues including Critical Studies in Media Communication, International Journal of Communication, the Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication, American Behavioral Scientist, Television & New Media, and the proceedings of the ACM’s conferences on Computer-Human Interaction and Computer Supported Collaborative Learning. He is writing a book on a public right to hear in an age of networked journalism (under contract with MIT Press).

THE BEST WAY TO GET AN ‘A’ IN THIS CLASS

- do all the assigned readings before the class (doing so will help the material make sense and we’ll draw on both the required foundational and application readings);
- turn your phone off during class and don’t wander off to social media while using your laptop (you’ll take the best notes if you stay focused on class in class);
- make friends with fellow students, trade notes, form discussion groups;
- leave yourself time to edit and revise your responses to the ‘reflection’ assignments (i.e., don’t leave it until the night before to write them);
- stay in touch with me, participate often and thoughtfully in discussion sections, and come to my office hours (this will help you stay connected to the course);
- practice applying the concepts we discuss in class immediately as you use and encounter new press communication technologies.

This course is designed not only to expose you to a variety of ideas and controversies associated with press communication technologies, but also the varied ways that people communicate about and debate press communication technologies.

I’m asking you to consider a variety of materials in this class – everything from videos, podcasts, and long-form popular press articles to easily accessible book chapters and more challenging scholarly pieces published in academic journals. Each class has a list of materials you are required to read and make notes on – but you are not responsible for readings labeled ‘Recommended/Background’.

Some readings are more challenging or longer than others. Give yourself sufficient time to read and flag difficult bits for us to talk about in lecture, discussion sections, or office hours. A large class like this works best if everyone has done the reading ahead of time and you come to class with questions. I love it when students ask questions and try to make even large classes as conversational and interactive as possible – please always feel free to speak up.
ASSIGNMENTS & GRADING

**Weekly Questions, Attendance, Participation (60 points)**
You are expected to do all of the assigned readings, come to class prepared to participate, and actively contribute to each week’s discussion. To that end, you must submit via the Blackboard ‘Discussion’ link one question on that week’s assigned materials by 12noon Tuesday. The best questions will help open the conversation and start good discussions (e.g., "What kind of privacy rules should algorithm designers follow?") and not be simple definitional questions (e.g., “What’s an algorithm?”) Individual questions will not be graded but must be completed each week. Failure to submit questions will result in a low grade on this component.

**‘Opening’ Readings (2 x 25 points = 50 points)**
Twice during the semester, you will individually ‘open’ one of the foundational readings. I’ll say more in class about what this means, but the ideal opening is very short summary of the paper’s key themes and then active leadership of a discussion that: stays close to the reading (does not divergence beyond what it says); compares it to other readings and the course themes; and generates new ways to help your fellow students understand and relate to it. It’s not required, but you may provide a hand-out or show supporting media if you think they’ll help the conversation about that reading.

**In-Class Case Studies (2 x 40 points = 80 points)**
Twice during the semester, individually or in pairs, you will lead a discussion on an emerging networked news technology, organization, or event. You have considerable freedom to define the topic of the case study and I can provide ideas if necessary. The list of “application” materials for each week is a good start for ideas but I’m happy to talk with you if you need ideas. You will make a very short (5-minute) presentation on the technology/organization/event and then lead a 20-30 minute discussion on it. I expect you to come prepared with discussion questions, a short activity, or other materials that engage your fellow students in the case.

**Reflections (2 x 75 points = 150 points total)**
Twice during the semester, you’ll submit a short written reflection (approximately 750 words) on some aspect of the course. Each reflection will be graded out of 75 points and I will announce the topics at least two weeks in advance. They will not require not reading or research beyond what is assigned in the class. Due dates:

- **Reflection #1:** Tuesday, February 17th
- **Reflection #2:** Tuesday, March 31st

**NOTE:** You can revise and resubmit ONE reflection assignment for re-grading. You must resubmit no later than 14 days after the reflection has been returned to you. No resubmissions will be accepted after 14 days. You do not have to revise and resubmit any reflection assignment; it is your choice.

**Final Paper Proposal (15 points): April 14**
In preparation for your final paper (see below), you will submit a short proposal that describes what you’re going to do, what questions or materials you’ll be working with, what your timeline is, and any resources you require. This is meant to be a small check-in so that you and I can understand what your final project will be and what you need to make it successful.

**Final Presentation (35 points): April 28**
In the final class you will give an individual 10-12 minute presentation on the current state of your final paper. Since the final paper is not due at that class (it is due May 8), the presentation should be a preliminary discussion of your analysis and an opportunity to have a class discussion about challenges you’re encountering and to get feedback from me and your fellow students.
Final Paper (115 points): May 8

You have considerable freedom to decide the topic of your final project (e.g., you might choose to expand on one of your reflection assignments), but I ask you to choose one of the following formats:

1. A traditional “deep analysis” (2,000-3,000 words) in which you closely analyze, compare, and synthesize at least 5 of the class’s “Foundations” readings on a topic of your choice;

2. A system evaluation (2,000-3,000 words) in which you apply at least 2 “Foundations” readings to an existing communication technology, using the readings to analyze the technology and suggest ways that it might be changed in light of the readings;

3. A system design in which you prototype a new communication technology (we can discuss different design approaches and prototyping materials) and write a paper (1,500 words) on how your prototype at least 2 of the class’s “Foundations” readings. For this third, system design option, you may work in groups to prototype a system, but each group member must submit his/her own paper.

For all formats and papers, you are encouraged to use the readings we’ve discussed in class, consult the “recommended/supplemental” reading list at the end of the syllabus, and find sources of your own. I will say more about this project in class. In the final class, you will give a 10-15 minute presentation on the state of your final project, getting feedback from the class that should feed into your final paper submission (due during the exam period).

Recommended Subscriptions (0 points): Although I won’t be evaluating you on their contents, I strongly recommend that you subscribe to these two email lists and listen to this podcast every week (all free):

- Harvard’s Nieman Journalism Lab (daily email):
  http://www.niemanlab.org/subscribe/

- Pew Research’s Journalism Project (daily email):
  http://www.journalism.org/ → submit email address under ‘Get the Daily Briefing’ in the top-right corner of the page

- On The Media (weekly podcast)
  http://www.onthemedia.org/

You should at least skim headlines, get a sense of the topics being covered, and think about how these contemporary topics relate to class themes. These are leading sources of news about the news industry, regularly read by practicing journalists and news industry analysts. Following them should get you in the habit not only of reading news, but thinking about where news comes from.

TOTAL POSSIBLE POINTS: 500 points

Final grades will be assigned to the following total point ranges:

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<tr>
<th>Points Range</th>
<th>Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>500-467</td>
<td>A</td>
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<tr>
<td>466-450</td>
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<td>449-433</td>
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<td>432-416</td>
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<td>332-316</td>
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<td>315-300</td>
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<tr>
<td>299-Below</td>
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Late Policies:
Unless there is a valid, documented medical/family reason and the student has communicated with the instructor before an assignment’s due date, late assignments will not be accepted without penalty. If an assignment is submitted late, we will subtract one partial letter grade for every 24 hours the assignment is late. E.g., an assignment handed in 24 hours late can only earn a maximum possible grade of A-minus; 48 hours late, B-plus, etc. No assignment will be accepted more than 72 hours past the due date, unless discussed with the instructor before the original due date.

I’ll generally answer your email within about 24 hours, but I usually don’t answer email on weekends or after 7pm on weekdays. If it’s an urgent matter (e.g., an emergency that will prevent you from completing an assignment), please mark the subject line of your email ‘urgent’. If you have a longer question that would be best addressed in a conversation, please my office hours or make an appointment. I’m always happy to meet with students and more involved questions are often best addressed face to face.

Please make friends with your fellow students – they’re often your best first point of contact if you missed a class. I can’t summarize whole classes either in person or email so please be sure to have a few friends you can borrow notes from if you miss a class. It’s also a good idea to form small study groups to review material.

ACADEMIC CONDUCT & SUPPORT SYSTEMS

Academic Conduct
Plagiarism—presenting someone else’s ideas as your own, either verbatim or recast in your own words—is a serious academic offense with serious consequences. Please familiarize yourself with the discussion of plagiarism in SCampus in Section 11, Behavior Violating University Standards https://scampus.usc.edu/1100-behavior-violating-university-standards-and-appropriate-sanctions. Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in SCampus and university policies on scientific misconduct, http://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct.

Support Systems
Discrimination, sexual assault, and harassment are not tolerated by the university. You are encouraged to report any incidents to the Office of Equity and Diversity http://equity.usc.edu or to the Department of Public Safety, http://capsnet.usc.edu/department/department-public-safety/online-forms/contact-us. This is important for the safety of the whole USC community. Another member of the university community — such as a friend, classmate, advisor, or faculty member — can help initiate the report, or can initiate the report on behalf of another person. The Center for Women and Men http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/cwm/ provides 24/7 confidential support, and the sexual assault resource center webpage http://sarc.usc.edu describes reporting options and other resources.
COURSE SCHEDULE
The schedule and readings described below may change as the semester progresses. If it does I’ll be sure to give you plenty of notice, mention changes in class, and send an email summarizing the changes.

All readings under FOUNDATIONS and APPLICATIONS are required, unless a choice is indicated.
(Recommended readings are not required.)

Week #1: January 13
INTRODUCTION

There is no required reading, but come to class prepared with:
- your own definition of “the networked press”;
- one example news technology, company, or event that you think fits your definition;
- reasons why you think it is important to study the networked press;
- your learning goals for the semester.

Week #2: January 20
WHAT IS THE PRESS & HOW DOES IT RELATE TO DEMOCRACY?

Reading / Listening Due

FOUNDATIONS:


Week #3: January 27
ROUTINES & RITUALS OF NETWORKED NEWS PRODUCTION

Reading / Listening Due

FOUNDATIONS:


APPLICATIONS: Read at least one and come to class prepared to discuss.

Ingram, M. (2014, May 22, 2014). Facebook’s product guy is right, the media sucks — but journalists are also right: Facebook has to share the blame. *GigaOm*. Retrieved May 25, 2014, from [https://gigaom.com/2014/05/22/facebooks-product-guy-is-right-the-media-sucks-but-journalists-are-also-right-facebook-has-to-share-the-blame/](https://gigaom.com/2014/05/22/facebooks-product-guy-is-right-the-media-sucks-but-journalists-are-also-right-facebook-has-to-share-the-blame/)


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**Week #4: February 3**

**ACTIVE AUDIENCES, USER-GENERATED CONTENT, AND SOCIAL MEDIA NEWS**

**Reading / Listening Due**

**FOUNDATIONS:**


**APPLICATIONS:** Read **at least one** and come to class prepared to discuss.


Week #5: February 10

NEWS ALGORITHMS, METRICS, AND THE PERSONALIZED PRESS

Reading / Listening Due

FOUNDATIONS:


APPLICATIONS: Read at least one and come to class prepared to discuss.


Recommended:

Week #6: February 17
FUNDING THE NETWORKED PRESS

FOUNDATIONS:


APPLICATIONS: Read at least one and come to class prepared to discuss.


Recommended:
Week #7: February 24

“FOREIGN” CORRESPONDENCE & “INTER-NATIONAL” NETWORKED NEWS

**FOUNDATIONS:**


**APPLICATIONS:** Read *at least one* and come to class prepared to discuss.


Sambrook, R. (2010, December 2010). Are foreign correspondents redundant? Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism, University of Oxford. from [http://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/sites/default/files/Are%20Foreign%20Correspondents%20Redundant%20The%20changing%20face%20of%20international%20news.pdf](http://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/sites/default/files/Are%20Foreign%20Correspondents%20Redundant%20The%20changing%20face%20of%20international%20news.pdf) → read Executive Summary and first chapter, skim rest


**Week #7: February 24**

“FOREIGN” CORRESPONDENCE & “INTER-NATIONAL” NETWORKED NEWS

**FOUNDATIONS:**


**APPLICATIONS:** Read *at least one* and come to class prepared to discuss.


Sambrook, R. (2010, December 2010). Are foreign correspondents redundant? Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism, University of Oxford. from [http://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/sites/default/files/Are%20Foreign%20Correspondents%20Redundant%20The%20changing%20face%20of%20international%20news.pdf](http://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/sites/default/files/Are%20Foreign%20Correspondents%20Redundant%20The%20changing%20face%20of%20international%20news.pdf) → read Executive Summary and first chapter, skim rest


## Week #8: March 3

**NETWORKED NEWS TIME: DEADLINES, CRIES, MEMORY, AND INTERTWINED RHYTHMS**

### Reading / Listening Due

#### FOUNDATIONS:


#### APPLICATIONS:

Read **at least one** and come to class prepared to discuss.


#### Podcast:

“Coverage of the Boston Bombing, Undercover Reporting, and More” (*On The Media*):


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<th>Week #9: March 10</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>NEWS FOR NETWORKED AIR: SOUND, RADIO, AND PODCASTS IN ONLINE ENVIRONMENTS</strong></td>
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<td><strong>(Guest: Shirley Jahad, KPCC)</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Reading / Listening Due</strong></td>
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<td><strong>FOUNDATIONS:</strong></td>
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<td><strong>APPLICATIONS:</strong> Read <strong>at least one</strong> and come to class prepared to discuss.</td>
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<th>Week #10: March 17</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>SPRING RECESS, NO MEETING</strong></td>
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<th>Week #11: March 24</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>GOVERNING NETWORKED JOURNALISM: LEGAL &amp; REGULATORY CHALLENGES OF A FREE PRESS ONLINE</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Reading / Listening Due</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>FOUNDATIONS:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>APPLICATIONS:</strong> Read <strong>at least two</strong> and come to class prepared to discuss.</td>
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from http://www.dmlp.org/blog/2013/who-journalist-here-we-go-again%E2%80%A6


Recommended:

--- REFLECTION #2 DUE ---

Week #12: March 31
DISCONNECTING THE NETWORKED PRESS: SECURITY, ENCRYPTION, & SAFE SPACES FOR ONLINE JOURNALISM
(Guests: Sarah Meyers [USC], Nathalie Marechal [USC], Jason Leopold [Vice])

Reading / Listening Due

FOUNDATIONS:
TBA

APPLICATIONS: Read at least two and come to class prepared to discuss.


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**Week #13: April 7**

**CASE STUDIES IN THE ADVERSARIAL, INVESTIGATIVE NETWORKED PRESS: WIKILEAKS, SNOWDEN, GREENWALD**

**Reading / Listening Due**

**FOUNDATIONS:**


**APPLICATIONS:** Read **at least one** and come to class prepared to discuss.


Podcast: “Reporter Had to Decide if Snowden Leaks were ‘The Real Thing’” (*Fresh Air*, 47m17s): [http://www.npr.org/2013/09/11/221359323/reporter-had-to-decide-if-snowden-leaks-were-the-real-thing](http://www.npr.org/2013/09/11/221359323/reporter-had-to-decide-if-snowden-leaks-were-the-real-thing)

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<th>Week #14: April 14</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>MAKING THE NETWORKED PRESS: NEW TOOLS &amp; PRACTICES OF NETWORKED JOURNALISM</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><em>(Guest: Amara Aguilar [USC])</em></td>
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<td><strong>-- PROPOSAL DUE --</strong></td>
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**FOUNDATIONS & APPLICATIONS:**


**APPLICATIONS:** Read at least two and come to class prepared to discuss.


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<th>Week #15: April 21</th>
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<td><strong>TOPIC TBD, BASED ON STUDENT INTERESTS / RESPONSE TO SUGGESTED TOPICS / CURRENT EVENTS</strong></td>
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**FOUNDATIONS:**

TBA

**APPLICATIONS:** Read at least one and come to class prepared to discuss.

TBA

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<th>Week #16: April 28</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>STUDENT PRESENTATIONS &amp; COURSE WRAP-UP</strong></td>
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**NO FINAL EXAM.**  
**FINAL PAPERS DUE:** Friday, May 8