USC Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism
JOUR 585: Specialized Reporting
Indonesia in the Age of ISIS
Spring 2015

Instructors: John Adams and Nick Street

Schedule, Class Policies and Syllabus

Day/Time: Fridays 1:00-4:00pm
Units: 3.0
Room: ANN 210
Section no.: 21642
Email j.davidjourno@gmail.com nick.shindo.streetis@gmail.com
Office: Street: ABM suite 200
Office Hours: Thu 1-2pm / Fri 10:30-11:30am or by appointment

Course Description:

Whether the issue is the rise of religiously inspired terrorism, faith-based homophobia or the political machinations of American evangelical congressmen, developments worldwide underscore religion's role in public life. Americans who assumed society was becoming more and more secular have been surprised by religion's resilience. The mainstream news media, unprepared for this resurgence, often ignores, underplays or trivializes religion's importance in social, cultural and political news. This course is a corrective. Its objective is to ensure that the next generation of reporters is comfortable covering religious beliefs and behaviors, faith-based institutions and the legal and political debates surrounding them, as well as current events at the intersection of ethics, religion and spirituality with politics and international relations. The course also aims to make students comfortable reporting across digital platforms and telling stories in different modalities. We do this by reporting on religion in Indonesia and in Southern California's Southeast Asian community.

The focus of the course focus is twofold: it explores religion in Indonesia as a phenomenon shaping both Indonesian society and a broader global culture that often overlooks but is decisively shaped by the world's largest Muslim-majority country. To better understand Islam, Indonesia's predominant religious culture, we will spend time in local mosques before and during our visit to Jakarta and Yogyakarta. Furthermore, to develop insight into both majority and minority religions in Indonesia, students will report on Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist and Christian practices and learn about Indonesian history and contemporary culture. Covering the Southeast Asian community in Southern California, students will explore the confluence of religion, economics and politics in diaspora life. During their immersion-journalism experience in Jakarta and Yogyakarta, students will learn about and report on firsthand the influences of colonialism, civil war, fledgling democracy, extremist networks, spiritual tourism, religious diversity and social media activism on the world's third-largest democracy.
This class is designed to run on student participation. Students must come to class superbly prepared to lead and/or discuss the readings and assignments. They must complete writing assignment on time. Students are expected to (1) attend all classes and participate in discussions; (2) read all assigned books and articles as well as track online news sources; (3) post on trans-missions, the website of the Knight Chair in Media and Religion; (4) write and report regularly, (5) engage in Muslim, Buddhist and Hindu practice before the immersion-journalism trip; and (6) attend lectures, events and related class activities.

**Required Readings and Supplemental Materials:**
The following books are required for class:

- Elizabeth Pisani, *Indonesia, Etc.: Exploring the Improbable Nation*, (New York: W.W. Norton, 2014) READ PISANI OVER WINTER BREAK. BE PREPARED TO DISCUSS DURING FIRST CLASS MEETING.
- Articles posted on Blackboard or available online.

**Course Objectives:**
- Develop students’ capacity elegantly, insightfully and intelligently to report on religion, politics, economics, development and gender / sexuality
- Develop student voices in multiple storytelling modalities
- Provide students with the skills to critique press coverage
- Enable students to discern great stories and to write compelling narratives
- Build students’ toolkit of resources for religion coverage
- Help students to produce under pressure

**Course Outcomes**
- Portfolio of at least two individual-byline stories, one group project and six blogs published by major outlets
- Working knowledge of at least two non-Western religions
- Ability to report in non-Western locales

**Course Requirements**
- Read books as well as articles on BlackBoard and be prepared to discuss readings in class and to lead discussions.
- Monitor Indonesia through Indonesian and American online news sites. You will be expected to write one blog—either a press critique or reporter’s notebook entry—each week.
• Be prepared to lead a weekly round-up discussion of news stories and related readings. **Students will be called on at random to lead this discussion.**
• Report on local Indonesian and Southeast Asian community. There are a variety of Southeast Asian religions in L.A. including Christianity, Islam, Buddhism and Hinduism. Find stories that look at religion and (take your pick) the arts, politics, economics, sexuality, gender, family etc. Individual and group stories need a news angle or must be really compelling as long-form features. (Take a look at what the 2013 class covered for ideas.) You can do breaking news, news features, first-person accounts, profiles or a review (of a timely book, exhibit, performance). Stories will not be considered finished until they can be printed or posted or broadcast. Articles should be between 650 and 800 words. **No story can be published until the instructors approve it.**
• We are fortunate to have Neon Tommy as an outlet for our work. However, you should try to expand your portfolios and publish elsewhere too. Global Post is our current publishing partner, and you are welcome to publish with other sites—including HuffPo, Religion Dispatches, Salon, Daily Beast, RNS, OnBeing. If you have contacts at any sites or publications, let us know ASAP.
• Spend time at a local mosque, Hindu or Chinese Buddhist Temple or Southeast Asian immigrant Christian community. Write at least two reporter’s notebook blogs related to these experiences.
• Indonesia field trip March 11-21 with TBD assignments.
• Regular attendance. Attendance is mandatory except for illness (which must be documented), a personal emergency or a religious holiday. You will be sent notices for extracurricular talks, films and events.

**Due Dates and Times:**
Due dates are indicated on syllabus. Late assignments will lose three points each day.

**Grading:**
- Four individual-byline stories: 40%
- One group project: 20%
- Five reporter’s notebook posts: 15%
- Five media critiques: 15%
- Class Participation: 10%

A note on grading: This course is writing intensive. The instructors expect you to pay close attention to the mechanics of good writing—grammar, spelling and organization. You are equally expected to conform to the style and structure of sound journalistic storytelling. **Stories submitted without (a) a headline, (b) a byline and (c) a lede or nutgraph will receive a D.** Each first draft will receive a grade reflecting the student’s grasp of the mechanics of writing, precision of language, range of sources, accuracy, depth and context. The goal by the second draft is to see all stories published.

**Your grade on the second draft will be your grade for the assignment.** One of the instructors will meet with you at least once before the Indonesia trip to discuss your work and its grade equivalent. However, if you are having difficulties with assignments
(finding stories, discerning angles and/or structuring information) consult with the instructors ASAP.

A minimum grade of C (2.0) is required in a course to receive graduate credit. Work graded C- or below is not acceptable for subject or unit credit toward any master's or doctoral program. A grade point average of at least 3.0 (B) on all units attempted at USC toward a graduate degree is required for graduation. In addition, a grade point average of at least 3.0 on all graduate work attempted at USC, whether or not all such units are applied toward the degree, is required.

Grades are calculated as follows: A+ (100-97); A (96-93); A- (92-90); B+ (89-88); B (87-83); B- (82-80); C+ (79-78); C (77-73); C- (72-70)

Policies and Procedures

Class Behavior

• Please treat every get-together with your classmates and instructors as if it were a meeting with your editors – that is, you won’t even dream of being late, or of leaving your cell phone on, or of showing up less than fully caffeinated. Likewise, you’ll treat every deadline as if it’s a try-out for the Los Angeles Times (or whatever your fantasy workplace may be). Translation: All students are to come to all classes with assignments complete and able to discuss the day’s readings.

• Professional Comportment: For purposes of this class, you are a bona fide member of the working press. You should expect to be treated with all of the normal courtesies and privileges afforded to the news media. In return, while you are in the field, you will represent the profession in an appropriate manner. Dress professionally. Please be aware of modesty standards when visiting religious communities. Women need long sleeves. If going to a mosque, bring a head covering.

Civility:

• Questions and discussions are welcome. The only requirement is that the questioner respects the opinion of others and not monopolizes class time. Given our focus on religion, which is an intimate matter and a potentially inflammatory topic, you will give alternate beliefs polite consideration whether or not you agree.

• Early departures: If there is a special circumstance that requires you to leave early, please notify the instructors before class so they can make sure that you get all the appropriate information concerning any upcoming assignment or quiz.

• While taking notes on your laptops, you should not be engaged in any activities not directly related to class discussion. Please silence your cell phones.
Internships:
The School of Journalism recognizes the value of professional internships as part of the overall educational experience of its students. Accordingly, while internships are not required for successful completion of this course, any student enrolled in this course who undertakes and completes an approved, non-paid internship during this semester shall earn academic extra credit herein of an amount equal to one percent of the total available semester points for this course.

To receive instructor approval, a student must request an internship letter from the Annenberg Career Development Office and bring it to the instructor to sign by the end of the third week of classes. The student must submit the signed letter to the media organization, along with the evaluation form provided by the Career Development Office. The form should be filled out by the intern supervisor and returned to the instructor at the end of the semester. No credit will be given if an evaluation form is not turned in to the instructor by the last day of class. Note: The internship must be unpaid and can only be applied to one journalism class.

Statement on Academic Conduct and Support Systems:

a. 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/.

USC School of Journalism Policy on Academic Integrity
The following is the USC Annenberg School of Journalism’s policy on academic integrity and repeated in the syllabus for every course in the school:

“Since its founding, the USC School of Journalism has maintained a commitment to the highest standards of ethical conduct and academic excellence. Any student found plagiarizing, fabricating, cheating on examinations, and/or purchasing papers or other assignments faces sanctions ranging from an ‘F’ on the assignment to dismissal from the School of Journalism.” All academic integrity violations will be reported to the office of Student Judicial Affairs & Community Standards (SJACS), as per university policy, as well as journalism school administrators.”

In addition, it is assumed that the work you submit for this course is work you have produced entirely by yourself, and has not been previously produced by you for submission in another course or Learning Lab, without approval of the instructor.
b. Support Systems

Equity and Diversity
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 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 https://sarc.usc.edu/ describes reporting options and other resources.

Support with Scholarly Writing
A number of USC’s schools provide support for students who need help with scholarly writing. Check with your advisor or program staff to find out more. Students whose primary language is not English should check with the American Language Institute http://dornsife.usc.edu/ali, which sponsors courses and workshops specifically for international graduate students.

The Office of Disability Services and Programs http://sait.usc.edu/academicsupport/centerprograms/dsp/home_index.html provides certification for students with disabilities and helps arrange the relevant accommodations.

Stress Management
Students are under a lot of pressure. If you start to feel overwhelmed, it is important that you reach out for help. A good place to start is the USC Student Counseling Services office at 213-740-7711. The service is confidential, and there is no charge.

Emergency Information
If an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible, USC Emergency Information http://emergency.usc.edu/ will provide safety and other updates, including ways in which instruction will be continued by means of blackboard, teleconferencing, and other technology.
About Your Instructors:

**John Adams** is the homepage editor for the Los Angeles Times and occasionally writes for Sports, Foreign and Travel. He worked as a pastor for 12 years before leaving his church to pursue journalism. He earned a Master’s in online media from USC Annenberg, and has worked for the Los Angeles Times since 2010 after leaving NBC Los Angeles, where he was a Web editor and the beat writer for USC, UCLA and the Clippers.

**Nick Street** is the senior writer at the USC Center for Religion and Civic Culture. He studied religious ethics at Oberlin College and the Candler School of Theology at Emory University. After a decade working as an editor in the world of scholarly publishing, he returned to graduate school at USC Annenberg, where he received an M.A. in print journalism. His writing on religion, science, sexuality, media and culture has been published by Al Jazeera America, the Wall Street Journal, Global Post, the Los Angeles Times, LA Weekly, the Jewish Journal, Religion Dispatches, Patheos and the Revealer. In addition to his role at CRCC, he has worked as the managing editor of TransMissions, the web site of the Knight Chair in Media and Religion at USC. He is also a resident priest at that Hazy Moon Zen Center in Los Angeles.
COURSE SYLLABUS

Week One: January 16
Introductions
Review syllabus: blogging (media critiques and reporter’s notebook), individual and group assignments
Weekly round-up: read Pisani over Winter Break. Be prepared to discuss, and connect to Indonesia items in the news.
News site monitoring, publishing partners
Discuss Kinkler and Stephan; Koch, Toer
Introduction to the local Indonesian community and to Islam, Hinduism and Buddhism

ASSIGNMENTS FOR NEXT WEEK
Reading:
Kunkler and Stepan, chapter 1
Robin Bush and Budhy Munawar-Rachman, “Majority Views on Religious Minorities in Indonesia” (BlackBoard)

Be prepared to lead the news round-up next week. Discussion leaders are assigned at random!

Reporting: Start reporting on your first individual-byline story. You can write a profile of a person, a religious institution, a place of business, etc. You also could write a review or a first-person narrative. If there is international news, you can do a local reaction story. If you can dig up local news, go for it. Or you can find a feature. You also could report on something newsworthy in relation to the community, e.g. how have local Indonesians been affected by religious turmoil abroad, economic changes, immigration issues, Obamacare, real estate prices etc. Is there a new film or TV series that is stereotyping Southeast Asians? Write a reporter’s notebook blog post on your story either next week or the following week.

Weekly blog posts, either news media critiques or reporter’s notebooks, are due 5pm each Monday unless otherwise noted. Posts should be 500 words or less. They also can be slide shows, audio clips or video (no more than two minutes). These must be publishable. Email to the instructors.

If a post or a story is breaking news, email it to the instructors, then text them to read it ASAP. No work from this class can be published until the instructors sign off on it.

Your first individual-byline story is due Monday, January 26 at 5pm. Email to the instructors. RELIGION MUST FACTOR INTO THE STORY. Stories must include at least two photos.
**Week Two: January 23**
Discussion of Indonesia news and readings. **Be prepared to lead the discussion!**
Local story update, feedback on blog posts
Group story discussion
Interviewing

Guest:

**ASSIGNMENTS FOR NEXT WEEK**
Reading:
Kunkler and Stepan, chapter 2
http://www.newyorker.com/culture/culture-desk/the-weird-genius-of-the-act-of-killing
Tom Boellstorff, “Some Notes on New Frontiers of Sexuality and Globalization”

**Your first individual-byline story is due Monday, January 26 at 5pm. Email to the instructors. RELIGION MUST FACTOR INTO THE STORY. Stories must include at least two photos.**

No blog post this week.

**Week Three: January 30**
Discussion of Indonesia news and readings. **Be prepared to lead the discussion!**
First individual-byline story feedback.
Group story discussion
Media partners update

Guest: Kevin Grant, Co-founder and Managing Editor, The Ground Truth Project (in partnership with Global Post). Discussion of story ideas and reporting strategy in Indonesia.

**ASSIGNMENTS FOR NEXT WEEK**
Reading Assignment:
Kunkler and Stepan, chapter 3
Andrew McGregor, “Geographies of Religion and Development: Rebuilding Sacred Spaces in Aceh, Indonesia, After the Tsunami”
Buddhism 101: http://www.buddhanet.net/e-learning/buddhistworld/indo-txt.htm

Weekly blog posts are due **5pm each Monday.**
Week Four: February 6
Discussion of Indonesia news and readings. Be prepared to lead the discussion!
Local story update, feedback on blog posts
Group story discussion

Nalika Gajarweera, research associate, USC Center for Religion and Civic Culture:
“Religion, Nationalism and Disaster: A Comparison of the Aftermath of the 2005 Tsunami in Sri Lanka and Indonesia”

ASSIGNMENTS FOR NEXT WEEK
Reading:
Kunkler and Stepan, chapter 4

Weekly blog posts are due 5pm each Monday.

Your second individual-byline story is due Monday, February 16 by 5pm. Email to the instructors. RELIGION MUST FACTOR INTO THE STORY. Stories must include at least two photos.

Week Five: February 13
Discussion of Indonesia news and readings. Be prepared to lead the discussion!
Local story update, feedback on blog posts
Group story discussion

Guest: Tom Hundley, senior editor, Pulitzer Center on Crisis Reporting.

ASSIGNMENTS FOR NEXT WEEK
Reading:
Kunkler and Stepan, chapter 5
Kira Kay, “Indonesian Province Turns Up Sharia Law After Tsunami:
Ishaan Tharoor, “The World’s Largest Muslim Country Bans Support for the Islamic State”

Second individual-byline story due Monday February 16 by 5pm. Email to instructors. RELIGION MUST FACTOR INTO THE STORY. Include two photographs.

No blog post due this week.
Week Six: February 20
Discussion of Indonesia news and readings. **Be prepared to lead the discussion!**
Second individual-byline story feedback, group story discussion

Prof. Sherman Jackson, King Faisal Chair in Islamic Thought and Culture, USC. Prof. Jackson will discuss sharia law, Islam and democracy, religious pluralism.

ASSIGNMENTS FOR NEXT WEEK
Reading:
Kunkler and Stepan, chapters 6-7

Weekly blog posts are due **5pm each Monday.**

Week Seven – February 27
Discussion of Indonesia news and readings. **Be prepared to lead the discussion!**
Indonesia story update, feedback on blog posts
Group story discussion

Guest: Anna Gade, Nelson Institute for Environmental Studies, Univ. of Wisconsin, Madison. Islam and environmentalism in Indonesia.

ASSIGNMENTS FOR NEXT WEEK
Reading:
Kunkler and Stepan, chapters 8-9
http://www.christiancentury.org/article/2012-06/clash-wasn-t

Weekly blog posts are due **5pm each Monday.**

Week Eight—March 6
Discussion of Indonesia news and readings. **Be prepared to lead the discussion!**
Indonesia story update, feedback on blog posts
Group story discussion
Discuss Indonesia plans

Guest: Don Miller, executive director, USC Center for Religion and Civic Culture. “Christianity in Indonesia and the Developing World”

MID TERM EVALUATION OF CLASS
Week Nine: March 13
Departure for Indonesia on March 11, arrive March 13. Hotel in Jakarta from March 13 to 17. Class meetings with journalists, government officials, scholars, religious leaders and social media figures. Individual and group reporting as per pre-trip class discussions.
**Week 10: March 20**
Depart Jakarta for Yogyakarta on Tuesday, March 17. Class meetings with scholars, religious leaders, NGO personnel, journalists and local community activists. Individual and group reporting as per pre-trip class discussions. Excursions to nearby UNESCO world heritage sites (Borobudur and Prambanan). Return to L.A. on March 21.

**TWO** blog posts are due during the week in Jakarta and Yogyakarta.

**Week 11: March 27**
No class, no blog post this week.

**ASSIGNMENTS FOR NEXT WEEK**
**Reading:**
Toer, chs. 1-5
Edward Schumacher-Matos, “Did an NPR Story Empower Road Rage Against Bicyclists?” NPR On Ethics, August 21, 2014

Weekly blog posts are due **5pm each Monday**.

**Third individual-byline story due Monday, April 6 by 5pm. Email to instructors. RELIGION MUST FACTOR INTO THE STORY. Include two photographs.**

**Week 12: April 3**
**Trip Postmortem**
Discussion of Indonesia news and readings. **Be prepared to lead the discussion!**
Third Indonesia story update, feedback on blog posts
Group story discussion

Guest: Jason DeRose, Western Bureau Chief, NPR News: “Journalistic Ethics and Multimedia Reporting”

**ASSIGNMENTS FOR NEXT WEEK**
**Reading:**
Toer, chs. 6-10

**Third individual-byline story due Monday April 6 by 5pm. Email to instructors. RELIGION MUST FACTOR INTO THE STORY. Include two photographs.**

**No blog post this week.**

**Week 13: April 10**
Discussion of Indonesia news and readings. **Be prepared to lead the discussion!**
Third Indonesia story feedback
Group story discussion—updates on story placement
ASSIGNMENTS FOR NEXT WEEK
Reading:
Toer, chs. 11-15

Fourth individual-byline story due Monday April 20 by 5pm. Email to instructors. RELIGION MUST FACTOR INTO THE STORY. Include two photographs.

Weekly blog posts are due 5pm each Monday.

Week 14: April 17
Discussion of Indonesia news and readings. Be prepared to lead the discussion!
Fourth Indonesia story updates, group story updates and placement progress
Discussion of freelancing, marketing/branding, job options

Guest: Jaweed Kaleem, national religion reporter, Huffington Post.

ASSIGNMENTS FOR NEXT WEEK
Reading:
Toer, chs. 16-20
Thomas Kent, "Impartial Journalism's Enduring Value," Huffington Post, June 25, 2014

Fourth individual-byline story due Monday April 20 by 5pm. Email to instructors. RELIGION MUST FACTOR INTO THE STORY. Include two photographs.

No blog post this week.

Week 15: April 24
Discussion of Indonesia news and readings. Be prepared to lead the discussion!
Fourth Indonesia story workshop, group story updates and placement progress
Discussion of religion coverage

Guest: Jo Piazza, managing editor for Yahoo Travel, author of If Nuns Ruled the World: Ten Sisters on a Mission.

ASSIGNMENTS FOR NEXT WEEK
Work on group project.

Weekly blog posts are due 5pm each Monday.

Week 16: May 1
Class party, evaluation

GROUP PROJECT COMPLETE Friday May 8, 5 pm