

ASCJ 100: The Changing World of Communication and Journalism

Fall 2015, 2 Units

10-Week Session: August 25-October 27, 2015¹

Day/Time: Tuesday, 4-6:20 p.m.

Classroom: ANN L105A

Optional 5-Week Seminar: November 3 – December 1, 2015

Day/Time: Tuesday, 5-6 p.m.

Classroom: ANN 402

Lead instructor:

Geoffrey Cowan, University Professor and Dean Emeritus

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Office Hours: Tuesdays, 3:00 – 4:00 pm; ASC 301B

Co-instructor:

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Course Description

For students interested in journalism, public relations, and communication, the USC Annenberg School is a fascinating place to study, work – and play. The world is experiencing dramatic transformations at all levels of society, with rapid changes in communication technology, social patterns, demographics, laws and regulations, and global markets. All of these shifts are changing the faces, professions and businesses of communication, journalism, public relations, entertainment, and so much more. As an introduction to those fields – and to the Annenberg School – this course will describe and give examples of exactly how these fields are changing, what remains at their cores, and what the new conditions mean for professionals in those industries and for our lives as citizens. In short, what does it mean today to be a journalist, public relations professional, or expert in communications? We hope that this class will provide students with a basic understanding of all three of the Annenberg School's undergraduate majors and of how they differ and intersect.

¹ As noted below, following the 10-week class there will be a five-week seminar for a select group of interested students.

Like our core fields, ASCJ is always evolving. This year we will present the findings of a multi-year Annenberg research project that asked leaders in public relations, journalism, and communications what skills they sought in the people they hire and promote. Together, we call this Third Space Thinking, and the results are available at usc.thirdspace.com. Over the course of the 10 weeks we will discuss how the 5 talents fit into your preparations for future success.

This class will meet for two hours and 20 minutes each week for **the first ten weeks of the semester**. (NB: After the end of the ten weeks, we will hold a small **five-week, non-credit weekly seminar** for about a dozen of the students who have displayed a particular interest in the topics covered during the semester.)

As a rule, each class will devote the first hour to a lecture and discussion of one or two important topics, often using current events as a way of exploring the subjects, delving further into the issues set forth in the assigned reading or viewing, and examining how people in each of the three majors would address the topic. The final hour of each class will generally feature guest speakers who are world-class communication professionals, journalists, news industry leaders, entertainment industry leaders, public relations experts, and newsmakers – as well as members of our School’s remarkable faculty and staff. Recent guests to this class and a previous, similar one taught by Professor Cowan have included Pulitzer Prize-winning photojournalist David Hume Kennerly, broadcast journalist Julie Chen, Academy Award-winning documentary director Davis Guggenheim, sports documentarian Ezra Edelman, sports journalist Karen Crouse, Fox Sports president David Hill, and top editors and reporters from the Los Angeles Times, Time Magazine, NBC News, The Huffington Post, and La Opinion.

After an introductory class, we will devote three weeks to discussion of each of our undergraduate majors – journalism, communication, and public relations. The fifth class will explore what we are calling Third Space Thinking – a set of talents and skills needed by everyone working in any of our fields. Then we will devote four class periods to substantive areas that, in somewhat different ways, are important to all three majors: politics and government; the globalization of audiences, news, communication, and business; entertainment; and sports. Our final class will include a discussion of what it means to be a part of the larger Annenberg Family. For those who take the optional additional five-week seminar, there will be a series of readings and discussions designed to probe these issues in greater depth.

Over the course of the semester, we expect students to stay current with important news stories and outlets by following a major newspaper such as the The New York Times or The Wall Street Journal; a leading broadcaster with a nightly newscast or a program such as The Daily Show; a digital media outlet such as Salon, Vice, Politico or the Huffington Post; and an international news source such as the BBC or Al Jazeera.

The class will include:

- 1) **A quick survey and critical examination of theories and practices that help explain the evolution of the news media and communication fields.**

- 2) **An analysis of what it means to be a professional journalist, public relations, or communication professional.** You will be exposed to some of our leading Annenberg instructors and alumni to get a taste of what can be in store for you as a student here.
- 3) **An introduction to changes in technology, audiences, laws and regulations, and what is sometimes called “convergence.”** Understanding these changes, and acquiring the skills necessary to succeed in the new media ecology, is essential for any student of journalism, communication, or public relations, and we hope that by mastering them our students will have a practical and intellectual edge in whatever field they pursue.
- 4) **A dialogue around key themes that will inform all our discussions,** including diversity and the globalization of ownership, audiences, and programming; media literacy and critical thinking; and the importance of good writing and creating a clear, effective, and engaging narrative.
- 5) **Exposure to what Dean Wilson calls “the third space,”** and the skills needed to navigate that space.
- 6) **A discussion of what it means to be an Annenberg citizen,** including an overview of the diverse skills and disciplines taught at the Annenberg School, the ways in which they intersect, and how you can benefit from combining them. You will see the “Annenberg advantage” in action, which comes from connecting the dots and combining an understanding of communication, journalism, and public relations.
- 7) **Finally, we will expose students to the array of educational and other programs and projects funded or run by the Annenberg Foundation.** We will, for example, discuss the Annenberg Space for Photography and the Annenberg Retreat at Sunnylands. Just as you are now a member of the “Trojan Family;” you are also a member of the “Annenberg Family” and we want to explore what that can mean for you.

From time to time, we will also remind you of a concept that we sometimes call “hustle and pluck.” The phrase is not perfect and we often use additional words such as “grit” and “character.” Our goal is to underline the importance of the enterprising, hardworking, public service-oriented and gutsy spirit that we hope to instill in as many Annenberg students as possible. We also hope to remain mindful of the wishes of Ambassador Walter Annenberg, who said that educating students “to be of service to all people is the enduring mission of this school.”

We hope that ASCJ 100 will serve as a warm introduction to Los Angeles, USC, and the Annenberg School – and to your classmates – as well as an engaging glimpse into important and rapidly changing fields.

Course Materials

Blackboard: Reading, viewing, and listening material for each week will be posted to Blackboard (blackboard.usc.edu). These readings will include an essay from your instructor, articles about current events, and PDFs of certain academic articles. We expect you to keep abreast of whatever material we distribute in class or post on Blackboard.

Between classes, Blackboard will be our primary means of communication for a range of functions:

- To notify you of reading and/or viewing assignments, describe upcoming class guests, and announce extra credit opportunities
- To present weekly blogs or essays by the instructors on topics to be explored or discussed in class
- To let you know of any changes in the course schedule that we decide to make as opportunities arise or events warrant
- To provide a space for students to post their weekly journal entries

In short, Blackboard represents our primary means of communication with you between classes. Please be sure to read our pages on Blackboard at least twice a week, including every Sunday.

Requirements and Evaluation

The following grading scale will be used in this course:

A	93% or higher
A-	90 – 92%
B+	87 – 89%
B	83 – 86%
B-	80 – 82%
C+	77 – 79%
C	73 – 76%
C-	70 – 72%
D+	67 – 69%
D	63 – 66%
D-	60 – 62%
F	59% or lower

Your letter grade will be established using a curve based on your relative performance in the course in comparison with your classmates. To perform well in the class, please be sure to turn in all assignments on time and to follow all instructions. Late work will be penalized.

The relative weight of assignments in this course is divided as follows:

Final Essay	35%
Special Class Project	30%
Autobiographical Essay	10%
Blog Posts	10%
Participation	10%
School & Community Events	5%

Below is a description of criteria for course assignments:

Blog Posts (10%)

Over the course of the semester students must post on Blackboard two journal-type entries on topics covered by the class. You can write about your reactions to the instructors' blogs, the reading assignments, and/or the discussions in class. Entries need not be more than 2 pages (about 600 words), but they should reflect a thoughtful engagement with a topic from class. It is your responsibility to post them to the Discussion Forum under Tools on Blackboard. (We may sometimes discuss the best of these in class.) ***The first post is due during the first five weeks of class by Week 5 – 4:00 p.m. on September 22; the second post is due by Week 10 – 4:00 p.m. on October 27.***

Autobiographical Essay (10%)

Students will write a 2-3 page essay (about 600-800 words) describing: 1) their background and interests; 2) the reasons they are interested in their specific major (journalism, PR, or communication; or in the case of non-majors, why they are interested in media and communication); 3) what they hope to learn from the class; 4) where they get their news and why; and 5) where they hope to be in 10 years. This assignment must be accompanied by a current photograph. ***Due Week 2: On September 1, you should (a) post your essay and photo to Blackboard by 4:00 p.m. and (b) bring a printed copy of your essay and photo to class.***

Special Class Project (30%)

Based on major issues, theories, and events discussed in class and in the readings, students will tackle a topic from the point of view of a journalist, public relations professional, and/or expert in some aspect of the field of communication. Students can ask for permission to tackle this as a group project. Students will select from three or four assigned topics and will present their project as a traditional 4-6 page essay or, *with approval from their TA*, an equivalent work (e.g. that explores the subject using any of a range of new media tools). The special project assignment will be distributed in Week 3. ***Due Week 5: A written description of your paper or project idea should be submitted to your TA on Blackboard for approval by 4:00 p.m. on September 22. Due Week 8: The special class project is due by 4:00 p.m. on October 13.***

Final Essay (35%)

The final essay topic will ask students to do some original research and to apply the material covered in the class. ***Due Week 10: Your final essay to Blackboard by 4:00 p.m. on October 27.***

Participation (10%)

This class relies on students' attendance and participation in both hours of the class, for the lecture and the guest presentations. Any unexcused absences or regular tardiness will affect this portion of your grade and will bring down your overall grade. If for any reason you need to miss part or all of the class, please notify your TA via email. Approved athletic competitions and other university obligations will count as excused absences with excuse form requests submitted to your TA at **least 48 hours prior** to missing class. Medical excuses must be verified by a note from a health care professional. **In addition to attending all classes, students are expected to stop by the instructors' office hours, or to arrange a different time to meet with the instructors, at least once during the course.**

School & Community Events (5%)

All students are expected to attend and write at least one paragraph about two relevant events at USC. Students will select these events from a list that will be distributed and/or discussed by the instructors. Both events must be attended within the 10 weeks of the course (between August 25 and October 27) and each write-up must be ***submitted on Blackboard within one week of the event***. The latest date that write-ups will be accepted is November 3 at 4:00 p.m.

Extra Credit

There will be occasional opportunities for extra credit that will be announced during class. Please try to take advantage of some or all of them since they can improve your grade significantly. Extra credit may also be awarded for thoughtful participation outside of class (e.g. in office hours and over email), and for attending extra events beyond the two required. After assigning grades on a curve of about 3.0, we will give students some additional points for extra credit assignments, particularly ones that have been well executed.

Class Policies & Resources

Use of Computers and Cell Phones

For this class we will use what might be called the Harvard Business School Rule: students will not be allowed to use laptops or wireless connections. Unless permitted by the instructor, cell phones must always be turned off during class. To understand the reasons for this policy, you may want to read the following: a study called "Why you should take notes by hand – not on a laptop" (<http://www.vox.com/2014/6/4/5776804/note-taking-by-hand-versus-laptop>); a *New Yorker* piece called "The Case for Banning Laptops in the Classroom" (<http://www.newyorker.com/online/blogs/elements/2014/06/the-case-for-banning-laptops-in-the-classroom.html>); and the studies of the late Stanford University Professor (and USC Annenberg School graduate) Cliff Nass that show the dangers of multitasking (summarized in an NPR segment that you can hear at <http://www.npr.org/2013/05/10/182861382/the-myth-of-multitasking>). The *Los Angeles Times* published on this class's "off the grid" policy in 2015 (<http://www.latimes.com/local/education/la-me-higher-learning-internet-20150305-story.html>).

Statement on Academic Integrity

USC seeks to maintain an optimal learning environment. General principles of academic honesty include the concept of respect for the intellectual property of others, the expectation that individual work will be submitted unless otherwise allowed by an instructor, and the obligations both to

protect one's own academic work from misuse by others as well as to avoid using another's work as one's own. All students are expected to understand and abide by these principles. SCampus, the Student Guidebook, (www.usc.edu/scampus or <http://scampus.usc.edu>) contains the University Student Conduct Code (see University Governance, Section 11.00), while the recommended sanctions are located in Appendix A. **When quoting from another source, be sure to put all of the material in quotations and to cite the source in a footnote.**

Statement for Students with Disabilities

Any student requesting academic accommodations based on a disability is required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. Please be sure the letter is delivered to me (or to TA) as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in STU 301 and is open 8:30 a.m.–5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. Website and contact information for DSP:

http://sait.usc.edu/academicssupport/centerprograms/dsp/home_index.html, (213) 740-0776 (Phone), (213) 740-6948 (TDD only), (213) 740-8216 (FAX), ability@usc.edu.

Sexual Assault Policy and Resources

The University of Southern California is committed to fostering a safe campus environment for all members of the university community, free from sexual coercion, violence and sexual intimidation. The university's sexual misconduct and sexual assault policies have been developed to reaffirm these principles and to provide recourse for individuals whose rights have been violated (the policy is available in SCampus, section E: <http://scampus.usc.edu/e-integrity-of-the-academic-community/>). To learn more about your reporting options and your rights, or to speak with a counselor confidentially, contact the USC Sexual Assault Resource Center/Center for Women and Men at 213-740-4900, or contact Student Counseling Services at 213-740-7711. For more information and resources, including off-campus resources like the Rape Treatment Center, visit the USC Sexual Assault Resource Center website at <https://sarc.usc.edu/resources/>.

Internships

The value of professional internships as part of the overall educational experience of our students has long been recognized by the Annenberg School. Accordingly, while internships are not required for successful completion of this course, any student enrolled in this course that undertakes and completes an approved, non-paid internship during this semester shall earn academic extra credit. 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.

Emergency Preparedness/Course Continuity in a Crisis

In case of a declared emergency if travel to campus is not feasible, USC executive leadership will announce an electronic way for instructors to teach students in their residence halls or homes using a combination of Blackboard, teleconferencing, and other technologies.

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](tel:213-740-7711). The service is confidential, and there is no charge.

NOTE: This is a 10-week class. Therefore, the deadlines to add, drop, or withdraw from this class are earlier. Please note the following important dates for this class:

Last day to register or add classes	September 4
Last day to drop without a “W” or change to P/NP	September 4
Last day to drop with a “W”	October 13
Last day of class	October 27

Schedule of Classes

The schedule, topics, and guest speakers are subject to change. *Please check Blackboard at least twice a week.*

August 25 *Introduction*

September 1 *Journalism*

Autobiographical Essay & Photo due (September 1)

Sept. 8 *Public Relations*

Sept. 15 *Communication*

Sept. 22 *Government, Politics, and Political Communication*

Sept. 29 *Third Space Thinking*

Oct. 6 *The Global World of News, Communication and Business*

Oct. 13 *Entertainment*

Special Class Project due (October 13)

Oct. 20 *Sports*

Oct. 27 *Conclusion*

Final Essay due October 27

COURSE INSTRUCTORS



Geoffrey Cowan is a USC University Professor, the inaugural holder of the Annenberg Family Chair in Communication Leadership, and director of the USC Annenberg Center on Communication Leadership & Policy. A former director of the Voice of America and dean of the USC Annenberg School, Cowan is also president of the Annenberg Foundation Trust at Sunnylands, a nonprofit organization that convenes high-level conferences for world leaders to address global challenges that hosted President Obama’s famed summit with Chinese President Xi Jinping in June, 2013. He is on the boards of the Pacific Council on International Policy, Common Sense Media, and the Susan Thompson Buffett Foundation, and is a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and the American Academy of Political and Social Science. In January, Norton

will publish his newest book: “Let the People Rule: Theodore Roosevelt and the Birth of the Presidential Primary.”



Ernest James Wilson III, Ph.D., is Walter Annenberg Chair in Communication and dean of the Annenberg School for Communication & Journalism at the University of Southern California. He is also a professor of political science, a faculty fellow at the USC Center on Public Diplomacy at the Annenberg School, a member of the boards of the Pacific Council on International Policy and the National Academies' Computer Science and Telecommunications Board, and a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. He served on the board of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting from 2000 to 2010, the last year as chairman.