



## **JOUR 405: Non-Fiction Television** **4 Units**

**Spring 2018 – Tuesdays – 9 a.m. - 12:20 p.m.**

**Section:** 21237D

**Location:** ANN 210

### **Instructor: Professor Daniel Birman**

**Office:** ANN 205A

**Office Hours:** Tuesdays, 8-9 a.m. and by appointment

**Contact Info:** [birman@asc.usc.edu](mailto:birman@asc.usc.edu), 213.821.1131  
(office), 818.434.4300 (cell)

### **Production Coach: Megan Chao**

**Office:** ANN 204F

**Office Hours:** By appointment

**Contact Info:** [megan.chao@usc.edu](mailto:megan.chao@usc.edu), 213.740.3927  
(office), 661.992.0925 (cell), Skype / Google:  
[megan.chao](mailto:megan.chao)

## **I. Course Description**

JOUR 405 is a hands-on production course that teaches a methodology in crafting a long-form nonfiction television story. From story conception and pre-production, through production and post-production, students will, by semester's end, be proficient in best practices and how these apply to the evolving trends in the television and documentary industries.

Producing a long-form story goes beyond the scope of traditional television news. It provides an opportunity for in-depth reporting and storytelling that offers viewers greater perspective. The goal of this class is to further develop what you already know about news reporting and apply these skills to a longer story.

The key to success in the class is coming up with ideas that are visual and for which you have access. Story subjects need to be relevant and practical, but they also need to be evergreen. A story about a news event can work as long as the approach takes an in-depth look at a larger problem. Example: If a car company introduces a line of cars that no longer need gasoline to operate – this is a news story. However, if you produce a story about the larger problems associated with our dependence on oil, the news of a new breed of automobile just becomes one minor part of the story.

The bulk of the work is creating a feasible idea from concept through completion. Students pitch marketable projects, do extensive research, identify experts and visual sequences that can help tell the story, write a script, edit, and revise their stories for publication. The class teaches you how to think about a story visually and how to build it using visual sequences within a manageable story arc. Students learn how to shoot with professional cameras, write, and edit for long-form storytelling in ways that will translate to any medium or platform.

Journalistic integrity and values are at the heart of it all. Your finished products should be creative and be able to stand up to the rigors of fairness and credibility. And you should be proud of your work.

## II. Overall Learning Objectives and Assessment

Students taking JOUR 405:

- Research ideas that can be produced within a semester
- Pitch a story idea with a specific placement in mind
- Review and analyze current and historical documentaries
- Collect relevant research materials
- Organize content for pre-production planning
- Learn advanced shooting and editing practices
- Shoot visual sequences for the documentary
- Log and transcribe the material
- Write a producible script
- Edit the nonfiction short program
- Make revisions based on first edit evaluations.

These objectives define the day-to-day work of long-form nonfiction stories. Every aspect of this form is complex, but equally interesting. Research, experts, actualities, interviews, visuals, sound, music, and graphics – these are the basic elements of a long-form story. The payoff is rewarding for the producer and for the viewer.

As we go through the semester, we'll discuss terminology and application so that when you walk away from this course, you'll have a strong and defensible approach to making important, honest and fair programs.

Keep in mind that you're in control of content that demands some levels of creativity to get people to watch. As you define the story through research and interviews, you'll develop the visual context as well. Your job is to create the content flow (the story) and decide how best to visualize it.

It's not enough to just create informational content though. We're in a highly competitive marketplace that includes digital platforms and broadcast networks and they're all vying for great work. But when you're among thousands of other content creators, what are you going to do to stand above all the rest?

JOUR 405 will teach you how to think about your own story to make it marketable. Digital sites measure hits and retention while networks monitor what audiences do second-by-second... losing an audience in the first moments is a disaster and becomes a problem for the producer.

Through observation (critiquing existing content), organization, and hands-on producing, you'll learn some secrets behind long-form storytelling that will, by extension, help you in your professional career.

### III. Description of Assignments

#### CLASS DELIVERABLES:

- **Pitches** need to be typed out, proofread and checked for grammar. You'll create two to three ideas. Each idea must be no longer than one typed paragraph. Turn in hard copy printouts as instructed in the course schedule. You'll also need to prepare for a verbal pitch in class. You should be able to get to the "So what?" and "Who cares?" elements within the first sentence – the big picture. You'll be graded on your ability to articulate ideas – based on credible facts – and how well prepared you are to answer questions pertaining to the topic.
- The **bibliographies** need to be in MLA format, clear and concisely laid out with a couple of sentences describing the significance of the research. Turn in hard copy printouts as instructed in the course schedule. You should be able to demonstrate an ability to conduct in-depth research with legitimate and reliable sources, like journal articles, feature stories, etc. Wikipedia is not a source. Think of big picture concepts in connection with your story – e.g. If you're producing a story about earthquakes in southern California, you need to cite statistics from the USGS about how many earthquakes happen in the region, how often, etc. One bibliography per team.
- **The story arc** is to be submitted via email as Microsoft Word documents. You will be graded on presentation of a clear, thought-out narrative and approach to the storytelling based on gathered, or yet-to-be-gathered elements. One story arc per team.
- **Edited sequences** are to be submitted as exported QuickTime files via Xchange. Victor Figueroa, your media production supervisor, will guide you through the technical process in the editing workshop and in his tutorials.
- **Scripts** are to be submitted as Microsoft Word documents via email to the instructor. (Please refer to the Optional Readings and Supplementary Materials section on pages 5-7 for format.) You will be graded on good visual descriptions in the left column, and how the story flows in the right column. *I will not grade an assignment that deviates from the example provided.* One script per team.
- The **rough cut edit** is to be submitted as an exported QuickTime file via Xchange. This is where it all starts to come together. You'll edit based on your script and any associated notes from me. You'll be graded on your how well you achieved what you said you were going to do in your script, as well as pacing, storytelling and visual sequences.
- The **fine cut edit** is to be submitted as an exported QuickTime file via Xchange. This is your final product.
- **Final deliverables: Release forms** for all featured persons in your stories are **REQUIRED**. I will not give a final story grade for segments missing release forms. Hard copies are to be turned in upon fine cut delivery. Our required release form is posted to Blackboard and available on the *Impact* website. Please be sure to make extra copies and put them in your camera bag before going on a shoot. *Any missing deliverables will result in no grade for the assignment.* A **conformed script** that reflects your fine cut from beginning to end is required, as well. Please email the Word document to the Impact team at [impact@usc.edu](mailto:impact@usc.edu).

## IV. Grading

### a. Breakdown of Grade

Assignment	% of Grade
Story Pitch	5
Research Bibliography	15
Story Arc	10
Edited Sequences (2 x 5%)	10
Script	15
Rough Cut	20
Final Edit & Final Delivery: Release Forms + Conformed Script	25
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100%</b>

### b. Grading Scale

The following is the grade scale that I use to assign letter grades. **It is up to you to keep track of your grades and to make an appointment with me to discuss any concerns you might have.** We will have a mid-course evaluation to let you know where you stand.

Sample grading scale provided below:

95 to 100: A	70 to less than 75: C+	45 to less than 50: D-
90 to less than 95: A-	65 to less than 70: C	0 to less than 45: F
85 to less than 90: B+	60 to less than 65: C-	
80 to less than 85: B	55 to less than 60: D+	
75 to less than 80: B-	50 to less than 55: D	

### c. Grading Standards

All assignments will be edited on a professional basis and you will be judged first on the accuracy, fairness and objectivity of your stories. You will then be evaluated for broadcast style, editing, production value, originality and the ability to meet deadlines.

An “A” grade means that the student has a full grasp of the concept and is doing exceptional work. Work is completed on time with minimal amount of editing required to complete the task. The grade demands that students exhibit professionalism.

A “B” grade means that the student understands and executes the work on time. There may be more extensive editing needed to complete the work, it is clear that the student grasps the concepts and exhibits professionalism.

A “C” grade means that the student completes the work with a minimal amount of effort. The work is done, but requires a fair amount of editing. It is clear that the student might not have done in-depth research, and the assignment does not meet professional standards.

A “D” grade requires excessive rewriting, has numerous errors and should not have been submitted. Work is unsatisfactory or fails to show important elements.

An “F” grade means you’ve failed to meet the major criteria of the assignment, are late, have numerous errors or both. Your writing should not contain any errors in spelling, style, grammar and facts. Accuracy is the first law of journalism. The following are some other circumstances that would warrant a grade of “F” and potential USC/Annenberg disciplinary action:

- Fabricating a story or making up quotes or information.
- Plagiarizing a script/article, part of a script/article or information from any source.
- Staging video or telling interview subjects what to say.
- Using video shot by someone else and presenting it as original work.
- Shooting video in one location and presenting it as another location.
- Using the camcorder to intentionally intimidate, provoke or incite a person or a group of people to elicit more “dramatic” video.
- Promising, paying or giving someone something in exchange for doing an interview either on or off camera.
- Missing a deadline.

## V. Assignment Submission Policy

- A. All assignments are due on the dates specified. Lacking prior discussion and agreement with the instructor, unexcused late assignments will automatically be given a grade of F.
- B. Written assignments must be submitted via email to the instructor per guidelines outlined in the syllabus.
- C. Video edits must be exported as QuickTime movies and submitted through Xchange. We will provide training on the system during the editing workshops. For technical issues, please contact Victor Figueroa, the Media Center’s Production Supervisor at [vfiguero@asc.usc.edu](mailto:vfiguero@asc.usc.edu).
- D. **Completed projects will be eligible for broadcast on *Impact*, USC Annenberg’s award-winning student-produced newsmagazine series. For more information, please visit: <http://www.uscannenbergmedia.com/category/watch/impact>**

**About the video shot for this class...** the footage you shoot for this course is the property of the University and the Annenberg School, only to be used by you for your story as an assignment, as part of your thesis project, and in all cases, as a story for possible inclusion on *Impact*. The footage cannot be used for any other purpose – whatsoever – without written permission from Annenberg.

You will be entitled to use completed copies of your stories for demonstration purposes and your resume. You may link to the *Impact* site on any Website that is specific to you and your job search. The story may not be used for any commercial purpose. Please refer to the Procedures and Guidelines for greater clarification on this policy.

## VI. Optional Readings and Supplementary Materials

### TEXTBOOKS AS REFERENCES:

Through observation (critiquing existing shows), organization, and hands-on producing, you'll learn the secrets behind long-form storytelling. In addition to the semester's work, the following reading list – available at the bookstore – will give you an even greater understanding of the history behind documentary television and the work that goes into creating it.

- Barnouw, Erik. *Documentary: A History of the Nonfiction Film*
- Rabiger, Michael. *Directing the Documentary*
- Bernard, Sheila Curran. *Documentary Storytelling: Making Stronger More Dramatic Nonfiction Films.*

### SCRIPT FORMAT:

The following pages show you a couple of examples of the script format that we will use. It's a format used in the nonfiction world. Notice the elements...

There is a **header row** that gives the segment title, show name, episode number, producer name, date, draft number, and on the right...the page number.

In the **left column**, the visual elements are described, whether they are interview references or sequences. Notice the reference to clip numbers, time code and its appropriate descriptions. All of this information makes it possible for an editor to find the clips and edit as laid out on the script with relative ease.

What's heard is shown verbatim in the **right column**, transcribed sound bites and narration. The **narration** is in all caps with 1.5 spacing. The SOTs are single-spaced in upper/lower case.

This first example is from my documentary for CuriosityStream about the hunt for dark matter. Narration is used. Sound bites push the story along, and narration writes into and out of the sound bites. You won't need to worry about numbering your rows like I have.

<b>Sequence: W.M. Keck Observatory</b>	50	<i>Music cue: Amsterdam LilyMcBeth.mp3</i>
<b>VO NARRATOR</b> EXT Lahaina, HI  Tilt up to reveal Mauna Kea Volcano Mauna Kea Card 1 Clip0005 3:06:59;00	51	ASTRONOMERS, LIKE RICHARD ELLIS, SEARCH FOR VISIBLE PROOF THAT DARK MATTER EXISTS. IN THIS CASE, ON A MOUNTAINTOP ON THE ISLAND OF HAWAII.  (10 seconds)
<b>VO / SOT Richard Ellis</b> Richard Ellis, PhD. Professor of Astrophysics, University College, London  Keck Ellis_Card 1 Clip0002 5:41:47;11  Drive up to Keck, GOPR0012.mp4 0:00:34;04	52	The romance of going to all these remote mountaintops, building these wonderful machines // is an example of something our civilization does supremely well.

<p><b>VO NARRATOR</b> EST Clouds + Mauna Kea telescopes</p> <p>Mauna Kea_Card 1 Clip0008 3:38:37;19 Mauna Kea_Card 1 Clip0010 3:40:50;18</p>	53	<p>AT NEARLY 14,000 FEET ABOVE SEA LEVEL, THE DORMANT MAUNA KEA VOLCANO ON THE BIG ISLAND OF HAWAII IS HOME TO SOME OF THE LARGEST TELESCOPES ON EARTH.</p> <p>(10 seconds)</p>
<p><b>SOT Richard Ellis</b> INT Keck viewing room, Lahaina</p> <p>Keck Ellis_1080 Card 1 10.08.2016 Clip0002.mp4 5:41:26;11</p> <p>Mauna Kea telescopes (continue from above) Clip0013.mp4, 0:00:28;13</p> <p>Keck telescope operator Keck Ellis_2 Clip0033 13:57:47;07 Keck Ellis_2 Clip0039 14:26:45;26</p>	54	<p>Just think every night // when you go to sleep, there are dozens of astronomers all over the world beginning to work // making their observations.</p>
<p><b>SOT Richard Ellis</b> Keck Ellis_1 Clip0002 5:26:19;21</p>	55	<p>Astronomers have a variety of telescopes for looking at dark matter.</p>
<p><b>SOT Richard Ellis</b> Ellis at computer console, shows Hubble images and points to evidence of gravitational lensing</p> <p>Keck Ellis_1080 Card 1 10.08.2016 Clip 0002.mp4 5:26:29;13</p> <p>EST W.M. Keck Observatory Clip0005.mp4, 7:14:03;19</p> <p>Mauna Kea_1 Clip0015 7:04:46;23</p>	56	<p>We're here at the Keck Observatory. This is an optical ground-based telescope. // We have a partnership basically with the Hubble Space Telescope, particularly in the area of gravitational lensing.</p>
<p><b>Actuality: Richard Ellis at computer</b> Continue sequence from above</p> <p><b>SOT Richard Ellis</b> Keck Ellis_1080 Card 1 10.08.2016 Clip0005.mp4, 5:51:28;24</p>	57	<p><i>So what you're seeing in this image at a stroke is the tremendous power of gravitational lensing. A huge foreground cluster with lots of dark matter is distorting and magnifying large numbers of background galaxies at various distances.</i></p>

<p><b>SOT Richard Ellis</b> Continue sequence – looking at Hubble images</p> <p>Keck Ellis_1080 Card 1 10.08.2016 Clip0005.mp4, 5:50:02;05</p>	58	<p><i>But then you can see this red arc here that is very, very nicely illustrated. It's about 3 times further away than the cluster, and you see multiple images, you see the same light, of the distant galaxy seen in different places. So it's like a mirage.</i></p>
<p><b>SOT Richard Ellis</b> Keck Ellis_1080 Card 1 10.08.2016 Clip0002.mp4, 5:51:45;19</p>	59	<p><i>So this opened up the way of studying dark matter thanks to Hubble.</i></p>
<p><b>VO NARRATOR</b> Shot of Hubble floating in space</p> <p><i>Getty_Hubble_169577419.mov</i></p>	60	<p>WHILE THE HUBBLE SPACE TELESCOPE CAN GATHER EXTRAORDINARY DETAIL FROM SPACE, GROUND-BASED TELESCOPES PROVIDE A BIGGER PICTURE.</p> <p><a href="#">(7 seconds)</a></p>
	61	<p><i>Music cue: Unanswerable 4 ANW2430</i></p>
<p><b>VO NARRATOR</b> INT Keck Telescope – it is positioning slowly</p> <p>Keck Telescope dome Clip0014.mp4, 3:48:02;13</p> <p>INT Keck Telescope Clip0039.mp4, 8:12:24;27</p>	62	<p>DR. ELLIS USES THE KECK TELESCOPES TO MEASURE DISTANCES BETWEEN EARTH, AND THE GALAXIES THEMSELVES, TO INTERPRET THE INFLUENCE OF DARK MATTER ON THE STRUCTURE OF THE UNIVERSE.</p> <p><a href="#">(11 seconds)</a></p>

When you have completed editing your piece, watch the segment and follow along with the script. What changed? What worked? What might you do differently next time? Take notes.

This will all be foreign for a while. With practice, you'll gain confidence in thinking through content and visual sequences. When you do that, you'll know that you can take-on any type of story, and that's when it all turns from stress to quality in-depth reporting – the thrust of this course.



## **VII. Laptop Policy**

All undergraduate and graduate Annenberg majors and minors are required to have a PC or Apple laptop that can be used in Annenberg classes. Please refer to the [Annenberg Digital Lounge](#) for more information. To connect to USC's Secure Wireless network, please visit USC's [Information Technology Services](#) website.

### **Add/Drop Dates for Session 001 (15 weeks: 1/8/18 – 4/27/18)**

**Friday, January 26:** Last day to register and add classes for Session 001

**Friday, January 26:** Last day to drop a class without a mark of "W," except for Monday-only classes, and receive a refund for Session 001

**Tuesday, January 30:** last day to drop a Monday-only class without a mark of "W" and receive a refund for Session 001

**Friday, February 23:** Last day to drop a course without a mark of "W" on the transcript. [Please drop any course by the end of week three (or the week three equivalent for short sessions) to avoid tuition charges.]

**Friday, April 6:** Last day to drop a class with a mark of "W" for Session 001

## VIII. Course Schedule: A Weekly Breakdown

*Important note to students: Be advised that this syllabus is subject to change - and probably will change - based on the progress of the class, news events, and/or guest speaker availability.*

<u>Week</u>	
<b>1</b> 01.09.2018	<b>INTRODUCTIONS</b>  <b><u>Lecture: Understanding Documentary and Long-form</u></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Realms of nonfiction television</li><li>▪ Journalism and integrity as a long-form practice</li><li>▪ Passion and creativity behind the craft</li><li>▪ Taking the timeliness out of newsworthy events</li><li>▪ The power of multimedia for long-form</li></ul> <b>Finding the Story and Presenting the Pitch</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Crafting viable story ideas for decision-makers</li><li>▪ Access and feasibility for execution</li><li>▪ Thinking about the audience</li><li>▪ Looking at the big picture: You have an idea. What does it mean?</li></ul> <b><u>Assignments:</u></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Research ideas for a 15-20 minute documentary project.</li><li>- Write single-paragraph pitches for <u>two-to-three</u> story ideas – one main, and up to two as backup. Email <b>Word document</b> to instructor by next class.</li><li>- Prepare to present verbal one-minute pitch for next class.</li></ul>
<b>2</b> 01.16.2018	<b>** DUE: PITCHES (WRITTEN AND VERBAL). HARD COPIES DUE IN CLASS.</b>  <b>PITCH SESSION &amp; In-Class Feedback</b>  <b><u>Lecture: Visual Literacy</u></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Thinking visually: marrying pictures and sounds with journalism</li><li>▪ Deconstructing the elements: people, locations, actualities, topics &amp; questions</li><li>▪ Pre-production: being prepared, informed and in control</li><li>▪ Utilizing available tools and resources to bring a creative vision to life</li></ul> <b>The Power of Research in Long-form Storytelling</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Research methodologies – how to find solid sources</li><li>▪ Statistics, accuracy of information and thinking critically</li></ul> <b><u>Assignments:</u></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Form teams &amp; email decisions on team members and topic by <b>Friday 1/19</b>.</li><li>- Begin in-depth research and compiling sources for bibliography.</li><li>- <b>FOR NEXT WEEK'S MANDATORY WORKSHOP: Read the shooting guidelines for the Sony NX-3/NX-5 (will be emailed).</b></li></ul>

**Week**

**3**

01.23.2018

**Advanced Camera Workshop - Part 1: Introduction to the Sony NX-3/NX-5**

- Cinematography terms and techniques
- Audio basics
- The interview: Techniques for long-form television
- Release forms and protecting yourself legally

**Assignments:**

- Check out the camera for practice.
- Begin gaining access to locations, characters and experts. Conduct pre-interviews.
- **Compile in-depth research by topic into MLA format. Bibliography due next week.**

**4**

01.30.2018

**\*\* DUE: RESEARCH BIBLIOGRAPHY. HARD COPIES DUE AT THE BEGINNING OF CLASS.**

**Advanced Camera Workshop - Part 2: Shooting in Sequences**

- Shooting sequences: Capturing visual information that conveys a basic narrative
- Getting a variety of shots and angles: wide shots, medium shots, close-ups, cutaways, etc.
- What to do on location and dealing with subjects
- Taking a pause to observe your surroundings
- Looking for telling details that reveal character, behavior, skill, humor, etc.
- Quantity v. quality

**Assignments:**

- Begin shooting.
- Bring media cards in to class next week for the edit workshop.

**5**

02.06.2018

**\*\* DUE: RAW FOOTAGE.**

**Lecture: Crafting the Story Arc**

- Pre-production: being prepared, informed and in control
- Identifying the main elements in your story
- Understanding your subjects, their environments and the right questions to ask before heading out on your first shoot

**Edit Workshop – Part 1: Media Management and Organization**

- Media management
- Project setup
- Importing footage
- Setting audio channels
- Your new best friend: The Impact Server

**Assignments:**

- Continue shooting. Log and transcribe footage. Bring footage to class next week.
- Begin preparing a story arc in outline format via Microsoft Word. Outline three sequences.

**Week**

**6**  
02.13.2018

**\*\* DUE: RAW FOOTAGE.**

**Managing Your Production Schedule**

- Importance of staying organized and planning ahead
- Anticipating obstacles and learning how to troubleshoot them
- Delivering your product on time

**Edit Workshop – Part 2: Advanced Editing Techniques**

- Translating your vision: from camera to edit
- Finding good sound bites, building a solid narrative
- “Radio cut” – creating a “selects” timeline
- Creating sub clips: logging and understanding your footage

**Assignments:**

- Continue shooting. Log and transcribe footage. Bring footage to class next week.
- **Finish your story arc** for your approved project. Due next class.

**7**  
02.20.2018

**\*\* DUE: STORY ARC. HARD COPIES DUE AT THE BEGINNING OF CLASS.**

**Edit Workshop – Part 3: Editing for Long-form Storytelling**

- Cutting sequences
- Transitions
- Split edits
- Pacing
- Exporting sequences and uploading to Xchange

**Team Meetings: Midterm check-in**

**Assignments:**

- Continue shooting. Log and transcribe footage.
- **Edit Sequence 1.** Due next week in class. **Export and upload to Xchange by 8 a.m. on 2/27.**

**Week**

**8**  
02.27.2018

**\*\* DUE: SEQUENCE 1.**

**Review Sequence 1**

*In-class review and feedback.*

**Lecture: Story Development**

- Troubleshooting storylines: weak story beats, missing footage
- Journalists' choices
- Additional sources for information or footage

**Lecture: Writing the Script**

- Translating raw footage to a script
  - Screening footage for good story beats
  - Script format and annotations
  - Responsibility of a journalist in long-form: sourcing and attribution
  - Writing to a long-form audience
- Managing large quantities of footage in preparation to write a script

**Assignments:**

- Continue shooting. Log and transcribe footage.
- **Begin writing script.** Refer to the *Supplementary Materials* section of your syllabus on pages 5-7 for format.
- **Edit Sequence 2.** Due next week in class. **Export and upload to Xchange by 8 a.m. on 3/6.**

**9**  
03.06.2018

**\*\* DUE: SEQUENCE 2.**

**Review Sequence 2**

*In-class review and feedback.*

**Lecture: Additional Storytelling Elements**

- Getting creative with visuals for nonvisual subjects
- Building on a skill set
- Discussions about progress and process

**Production Troubleshooting**

- The problems we predict
- Camera techniques: what's working, what's not working
- The ones we can't anticipate
- Project completion problems
- Ethical dilemmas

**Assignments:**

- Continue shooting. Log and transcribe footage.
- **Continue writing script.** Refer to the *Supplementary Materials* section of your syllabus on pages 5-7 for format.
- **Begin editing rough cut.**

**Week**

03.13.2018 **SPRING BREAK**

**10**  
03.20.2018 **\*\* DUE: SCRIPT. Email appropriately formatted Word document to instructor prior to class.**

**Lecture: Translating the script to the edit**

- How to turn your writing into video
- Changing the see-and-say mindset into thinking in sequences
- Letting shots go and pacing
- Rethinking the script
- Advancing the story

**Assignments:**

- Conduct pickup shoots, if necessary.
- Continue editing rough cut. Due in two weeks.

**11**  
03.27.2018 **Lecture: Current state of nonfiction television & career choices**

- The blurring lines between nonfiction and entertainment
- Understanding the marketplace: your ideas v. network interests and competition
- Realities of the industry
- Pitching your ideas: where to go and who to talk with
- What it means to work in long-form
- How class projects can help you find work
- Industry feedback

**Assignments:**

- **Finish editing ROUGH CUT. Due next week in class. Export and upload to Xchange by 8 a.m. on Tuesday 4/3.**
- Conduct pick-up shoots, if necessary.

**12**  
04.03.2018 **\*\* DUE: ROUGH CUT.**

**ROUGH CUT SCREENING**

In-class feedback. Instructor will email notes and grades.

**Assignment:**

- Conduct pick-up shoots, if necessary.
- Continue editing.

**Week**

**13**

04.10.2018

**Lecture: Comparing your vision with the execution of a story**

- What you pitched v. what we watched
- Surviving executive notes

**Making Editorial Decisions**

- Deciding when material hurts the storytelling
- Learning to fall out of love with too much footage
- Knowing when to trim and cut
- Journalists' choices
- Strong v. weak story beats

**Assignments:**

- **Edit PROGRESS CUT.** Due next week in class. **Export and upload to Xchange by 8 a.m. on Tuesday 4/17.**

**14**

04.17.2018

**\*\* DUE: PROGRESS CUT.**

**PROGRESS CUT SCREENING**

*In-class review and feedback.*

**Assignments:**

- Continue editing your project. **FINE CUT** due next week. **Export and upload to Xchange by 8 a.m. on Tuesday 4/24.**

**15**

04.24.2018

**\*\* DUE: FINE CUT.**

**FINE CUT SCREENING**

*In-class feedback. Instructor will email notes and grades.*

**Assignments:**

- Continue editing your project. **FINAL CUT** due next week. **Export and upload to Xchange by 8 a.m. on TUES 5/8.**
- Assemble final deliverables – ALL release forms and a conformed script.

**FINAL**

05.08.2018

**\*\* DUE: FINAL EDIT + DELIVERABLES (conformed script + release forms)**

**8–10 a.m.**

**FINAL SCREENING**

*In-class feedback. Instructor will email notes and grades.*

**YOU WILL NOT RECEIVE A GRADE IF ANY DELIVERABLES ARE MISSING!**

## IX. Policies and Procedures

### Additional Policies

#### Attendance

Class attendance is *mandatory*. Students are advised to attend the first class meetings of their journalism classes or the instructors may drop them. The School of Journalism adheres to the university policy, which states “an instructor may replace any student who without prior consent does not attend... the first class session of the semester for once-a-week classes. It is then the student’s responsibility to withdraw officially from the course through the Registration Department.”

#### Internships

The value of professional internships as part of the overall educational experience of our students has long been recognized by the School of Journalism. 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 herein of an amount equal to 1 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 into 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/b/11-00-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**

### *Student Counseling Services (SCS) – (213) 740-7711 – 24/7 on call*

Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention. [engemannshc.usc.edu/counseling](http://engemannshc.usc.edu/counseling)

### *National Suicide Prevention Lifeline – 1 (800) 273-8255*

Provides free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. [www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org](http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org)

### *Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Services (RSVP) – (213) 740-4900 – 24/7 on call*

Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender-based harm. [engemannshc.usc.edu/rsvp](http://engemannshc.usc.edu/rsvp)

### *Sexual Assault Resource Center*

For more information about how to get help or help a survivor, rights, reporting options, and additional resources, visit the website: [sarc.usc.edu](http://sarc.usc.edu)

### *Office of Equity and Diversity (OED)/Title IX Compliance – (213) 740-5086*

Works with faculty, staff, visitors, applicants, and students around issues of protected class. [equity.usc.edu](http://equity.usc.edu)

### *Bias Assessment Response and Support*

Incidents of bias, hate crimes and microaggressions need to be reported allowing for appropriate investigation and response. [studentaffairs.usc.edu/bias-assessment-response-support](http://studentaffairs.usc.edu/bias-assessment-response-support)

### *The Office of Disability Services and Programs*

Provides certification for students with disabilities and helps arrange relevant accommodations. [dsp.usc.edu](http://dsp.usc.edu)

### *Student Support and Advocacy – (213) 821-4710*

Assists students and families in resolving complex issues adversely affecting their success as a student EX: personal, financial, and academic. [studentaffairs.usc.edu/ssa](http://studentaffairs.usc.edu/ssa)

### *Diversity at USC*

Information on events, programs and training, the Diversity Task Force (including representatives for each school), chronology, participation, and various resources for students. [diversity.usc.edu](http://diversity.usc.edu)

### *USC Emergency Information*

Provides safety and other updates, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible. [emergency.usc.edu](http://emergency.usc.edu)

*USC Department of Public Safety – UPC: (213) 740-4321 – HSC: (323) 442-1000 – 24-hour emergency or to report a crime.* Provides overall safety to USC community. [dps.usc.edu](http://dps.usc.edu)

## X. About Your Instructor: Daniel H. Birman

**Daniel H. Birman** is a nonfiction and documentary producer based in Los Angeles. Birman is currently in production on *The Earliest Americans*, a project about the first humans who migrated into North America, and *Sentencing Children*, a feature documentary about juvenile sentencing laws in America and a potential reform effort. This project continues the work of an investigative digital series by the same name, recently completed in partnership with **Independent Lens** and *The Tennessean*. Birman also recently produced *The Hunt for Dark Matter*, a documentary about recent advancements in space exploration, for digital streaming service **CuriosityStream**.

Some notable work includes: *Perfecting Flight*, a feature documentary about legendary aviator Bob Hoover, whose significant contributions to aviation began in WWII. At age 91, he flies for the last time and tells his story. Birman was a contributing producer for *The Big Bang Machine*, a special for **PBS - NOVA** about one of the great scientific discoveries in modern times, the Higgs boson, a tiny particle that explains how the universe was formed. *Chasing Speed: Leslie Porterfield* for **Velocity** is the story about the world's fastest woman on a motorcycle. Birman produced an internationally acclaimed social documentary, *Me Facing Life: Cyntoia's Story* for **PBS - Independent Lens**, which was also featured as part of the ITVS Community Cinema program. Birman wrote, produced, and directed the documentary, *Brace for Impact: the Chesley B. Sullenberger Story* for **TLC** and **Discovery**. Birman also has an extensive body of work producing science and medical programming for cable networks.

His production company, **Birman Productions**, is in development and production on a number of docu-series and specials, including a series based on *The New York Times* Bestsellers list book series, *The Hinges of History*, written by the popular history author, Thomas Cahill.

Birman is also a Professor of Professional Practice at the **USC Annenberg School of Journalism**, where he teaches documentary production and is the Executive Producer of *Impact*, a student-produced long form series at Annenberg.

Additionally, for two decades, Birman served on the Board of Governors for the **Television Academy**, representing the Documentary peer group. He currently serves as chair of the Bylaws and Academy Experience committees.

## About Your Production Coach: Megan Chao

Megan Chao is vice president of development and production for Daniel H. Birman Productions, Inc., a media production company based in Los Angeles. In her role, she oversees the logistical operations of the company, from pre-production through production and post-production. She also manages the overall corporate strategy for the company.

Chao joined the company in early 2009 as a researcher on *Brace for Impact: The Chesley B. Sullenberger Story*, a documentary for TLC and Discovery Channel. She quickly rose through the ranks, becoming an award-winning producer and editor (Avid, FCP and Adobe Premiere proficient). She is also a cinematographer (Sony and Canon) and writer. She has a track record of successfully taking shows from development through network delivery.

Chao is an adjunct faculty member at USC's Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism, and is line producer and online editor for the student-produced television newsmagazine show, *Impact*. She has a master's degree in broadcast journalism from USC Annenberg and dual bachelor's degrees in biology and nonfiction creative writing from the University of California at Riverside.

She is an active member of the Television Academy in the documentary peer group, as well as the International Documentary Association.