

**JOUR 499: Reporting on the Homeless**

**2 Units**

**Fall 2018**

**Wednesdays, 9:00-12:20**

**Section:** TBA

**Location:** ASC 240

**Instructors:**

**Mary Murphy**

**Office:** Room 301 G

**Office Hours:** TBA

**Contact Info:** [mary.murphy@usc.edu](mailto:mary.murphy@usc.edu); 213.821.1983

**Sandy Tolan**

**Office:** ASC 332D

**Office Hours:** TBA

**Contact Info:** [sandytolan@gmail.com](mailto:sandytolan@gmail.com); 510-717-1172 (cell)

**I. Course Description**

Despite a declared “state of emergency,” and hundreds of millions of dollars in pledged funds, homelessness in Los Angeles keeps getting worse. In a single recent 12-month period the number of homeless people in the city jumped by a startling 11 percent. Current estimates now put LA’s homeless population at nearly 44,000 people, equivalent to the size of Palm Springs. The increases went nearly across the board: men and women; young and old; Black, white, Latino. The tents of the homeless now spread to neighborhoods previously untouched: along Franklin Avenue in Los Feliz; beside West Hollywood’s Poinsettia Park; at the edge of the Downtown museum district; down the long I-10 freeway ramps in Santa Monica and on the streets of Venice.

This multimedia class will investigate the causes of growing homelessness in Los Angeles, examine city, state, and federal commitment to curb or end homelessness, and spend time on the ground, in Skid Row and elsewhere, to report on the human experience of homelessness. Among the stories we will consider: Why is LA homelessness on the rise, and where is it growing or shrinking? Is the automobile indeed the “new studio apartment”? At a cost of $35 a night are the 24/7 Korean Spas becoming secret homeless encampments? How can tensions between the homeless and police be lessened? Can innovative architectural solutions, along with increased funds for traditional services, truly curb the number of the city’s homeless? Or is treatment for alcohol and drug abuse the real solution, along with job training? Will the City of Los Angeles’s “state of emergency,” and pledge of $100 million to end the crisis, lead to a meaningful solution? And what are the “success stories” of homeless, and how can they be applied to a broader solution going forward?

**II. Overall Learning Objectives and Assessment**

Students in this class will immerse themselves in a complex story through its various aspects – the causes, realities, consequences and solutions for homelessness – with a series of readings, guest lectures, field trips, and most importantly, their own on-the-ground investigations. The class will be divided into several thematic teams, to explore the experience of homelessness, criminal justice issues, mental health and addiction, and solutions. Additionally, a data and visual team will design a social media strategy and website. The end product will be a multi-part, multi-platform exploration of one of the most challenging, entrenched problems in all of Los Angeles and beyond. The workload will be formidable and your instructors high-energy and encouraging, yet demanding, in order for the output for this class to meet high professional standards. Indeed, it is our intention to publish and broadcast this work through established Los Angeles, California, and perhaps national media outlets. In the end, students in this class will gain valuable skills not only in producing in-depth multimedia reports, but in conceiving and distributing a coordinated, multipart series for professional publication and broadcast.

**III. Description of Assignments**

Students will spend the entire semester researching, reporting, and producing one major story, most often in a minimum of two formats. As such, the bulk of the assignments will consist of weekly reporting memos and, subsequently, a series of drafts and/or rough cuts leading to a final product. Students will work in two- or three-person teams (some in more than one team) to produce stories in various formats. Crucial to the process will be identifying accessible, do-able stories early in the semester, and consistent work each week to help ensure that yours will be illuminating, deeply-reported work that you will be proud of.

**IV. Grading**

**a. Breakdown of Grade**

| Assignment | Points | % of Grade |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Regular reporting memos | 250 | 25 |
| Initial drafts | 250 | 25 |
| Final draft | 500 | 40 |
| Class attendance and participation | 100 | 10 |
| **TOTAL** | **1000** | **100%** |

**b. Grading Scale**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 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 clarity of your stories. You will then be evaluated for broadcast style, editing, production value, originality and the ability to meet deadlines.

**“A” stories** are accurate, clear, comprehensive stories that are well written and require only minor copyediting (i.e., they would be aired or published). Video work must also be shot and edited creatively, be well paced and include good sound bites and natural sound that add flavor, color or emotion to the story.

**“B” stories** require more than minor editing and have a few style or spelling errors or one significant error of omission. For video, there may be minor flaws in the composition of some shots or in the editing. Good use of available sound bites is required.

**“C” stories** need considerable editing or rewriting and/or have many spelling, style or omission errors. Camera work and editing techniques in video stories are mediocre or unimaginative, but passable. Sound bites add little or no color - only information that could be better told in the reporter’s narration.

**“D” stories** require excessive rewriting, have numerous errors and should not have been submitted. Camera work is unsatisfactory or fails to show important elements.

**“F” stories** have failed to meet the major criteria of the assignment, are late, have numerous errors or both. Your copy should not contain any errors in spelling, style, grammar and facts. Any misspelled or mispronounced proper noun will result in an automatic “F” on that assignment. Any factual error will also result in an automatic “F” on the assignment. 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**

All homework assignments should be turned into the instructor(s) no later than the next class, unless directed otherwise by your instructor. Please post your work to our Blackboard site and, to be safe, you must also email your work to your instructor.

**VI. Required Readings and Supplementary Materials**

Readings will be assigned mainly from a Course Reader. Subsequently, additional readings and videos may be assigned based on the direction of the four class teams.

***Reader, Part 1:***

Homeless Statistics

<https://www.lahsa.org/homeless-count/demographics>

<https://www.lahsa.org/>

1. "Down, Out and Under Arrest"

Chapter 1 Excerpt: "Fixing the Poor" available on Google Books: <https://books.google.com/books?id=idzFDAAAQBAJ&pg=PA35&source=gbs_toc_r&cad=2#v=onepage&q&f=false>

(Or, text, Introduction and Chapter 1, pp. 1-78.)

2a. Homeless Problem Overview

"On the Streets: 12 part docuseries on homelessness in SoCal"

<http://www.latimes.com/local/california/la-me-biagiotti-onthestreets-20151118-htmlstory.html>

LA Times Homeless Data Map:

<http://graphics.latimes.com/homeless-los-angeles-2015/>

Homeless in Los Angeles by Dana Goodyear, The New Yorker

<http://www.newyorker.com/culture/cultural-comment/homeless-in-los-angeles>

LA sees another sharp rise in homelessness, outdoor tents, LA Times, May, 4, 2016

<http://www.latimes.com/local/lanow/la-me-ln-homeless-count-20160504-story.html>

***Reader, Part 2:***

2b. Debate and Possible Solutions

“5 Solutions to Homelessness in LA”, according to L.A. Times' Steve Lopez

<https://www.google.com/amp/www.latimes.com/local/california/la-me-lopez-homeless-solutions-20160510-column,amp.html>

Mike Bonin's proposal to transform Metro lot into affordable housing in Venice, The Argonaut: <http://argonautnews.com/mike-bonins-big-idea/>

How Should L.A. spend its $100-million housing fund? Op-ed, L.A. Times

<http://www.latimes.com/opinion/op-ed/la-oe-1023-homeless-100-million-fund-20151022-html-htmlstory.html>

Is the shift to permanent housing making L.A.'s homeless problem even worse? L.A. Times <http://www.latimes.com/local/lanow/la-me-ln-transitional-housing-cutbacks-20160815-snap-story.html>

2c. Low income and Affordable housing in Downtown

Inside the Rossyln Hotel's extreme makeover, Curbed LA:

<http://la.curbed.com/2014/9/30/10041148/inside-the-extreme-makeover-at-downtowns-rosslyn-hotel>

Old Luxury Hotel Turned Homes for Homeless, KPCC Audio + Vision:

<http://audiovision.scpr.org/391/old-luxury-hotel-turned-homes-for-homeless>

Downtowners don't want scandalous Cecil Hotel turned into Supportive Housing, Curbed LA:

<http://la.curbed.com/2014/3/17/10131328/downtowners-dont-want-scandalous-cecil-hotel-upgraded-and-turned-into>

The Strange Saga of the Cecil Hotel, LA Downtown News:

<http://www.ladowntownnews.com/news/the-strange-saga-of-the-cecil-hotel/article_d3b04ed8-abbe-11e3-b119-001a4bcf887a.html>

***Reader, Part 3:***

2d. The Running Judge:

<http://www.foxla.com/news/local-news/83055595-story>

<https://www.google.com/amp/www.runnersworld.com/newswire/judge-gives-homeless-addicts-a-second-chance-through-running%3famp>

Skid Row Orchestra

Nathaniel Ayers:

https://www.google.com/amp/www.latimes.com/news/la-me-lopez9oct09-column,amp.html

Street Symphony: https://www.google.com/amp/www.latimes.com/local/california/la-me-1209-lopez-homeless-messiah-20151208-column,amp.h

2e. Homelessness and cops

[http://www.latimes.com/local/lanow/la-me-ln-lapd-homeless-policy-20160621-snap-story.html](http://www.latimes.com/local/lanow/la-me-ln-lapd-homeless-policy-20160621-snap-story.html" \t "_blank)

2f. Homelessness and Mental Illness

**250,000 mentally Ill are Homeless. 140,000 seriously mentally Ill are Homeless**

https://mentalillnesspolicy.org/consequences/homeless-mentally-ill.html

3. Mayor's Plans

LA City Budget: <http://openbudget.lacity.org/#!/year/default>

Homeless measures take center stage in Mayor Garcetti's 2016 budget proposal, L.A. Times: <http://www.latimes.com/local/lanow/la-me-ln-garcetti-budget-20160420-story.html>

LA City Homeless Budget 2016: 1.85 billion

<http://www.latimes.com/local/cityhall/la-me-homeless-plans-20160108-story.html>

Spending plan for Measure H:

<http://www.latimes.com/local/lanow/la-me-ln-measure-h-spending-approved-20170613-story.html>

**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 Virtual Commons**](http://vc.uscannenberg.org/) for more information. To connect to USC’s Secure Wireless network, please visit USC’s [Information Technology Services](http://itservices.usc.edu/wireless/support/) website.

Respect for your instructors and fellow classmates is an essential part of this course. The work will be intense, and the rewards will be in part dependent on your ability to focus and bring your attention fully to the work at hand. Hence any emailing not specifically related to the class, or Facebook or other social media posting, will result in an “F” for the class attendance/participation portion of your grade.

**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.*

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Topics/Daily Activities | Readings and Homework | Deliverable/Due Dates |
| Week 1  August 22 | Overview and the experience of homelessness.  In class:  Introductions, assignments, expectations  Homelessness in LA: Two overviews |  | Before class |
| Week 2  August 29 | The City of Los Angeles and its commitment to end homelessness: will it succeed or is it doomed to fail?  In class:  Pete White, LA Community Action Network  Mike Arnold, Midnight Mission  Discussion of reading | Due in class: Half-page write-up on a homelessness story you’d like to see or do during the semester.  Reader, Part One | Before class |
| Week 3  September 5 | Criminal Justice  Guests in class:  Forrest Stuart, author of *Down, Out and Under Arrest*  Critique and discussion of ideas | Reader, Part Two | Before class |
| Week 4  September 12 | Mental Health and Addiction  Guests in class: TBA | Reader, Part Three | Before class |
| Week 5  September 19 | Solutions  Guests in class:  Sofia Borges and representatives of the homeless design class, USC School of Architecture (invited)  Los Angeles Superior Court Judge Craig Mitchell (invited)  Homelessness success stories: Orlando Ward, a Stanford Grad whose Skid Row spot was at 6th & San Julian now Executive Director of Volunteers of America.  Io Perry, mother, musician, homeless activist | First story pitch | September 18 |
| Week 6  September 21 | Skid Row Storytellers  Guests in class will discuss innovative ways to do compelling journalism on homelessness  Lysa Heslov, director of the documentary, “Served Like a Girl”  Andrea Iloulian, Hilton Foundation, “Invisible People” | Team One and Two reporting updates | September 25 |
| Week 7  October 3 | Forum: on-site visit to the Midnight Mission, with representatives of the City of Los Angeles and LAPD | Team Three and Four reporting updates | October 2 |
| Week 8  October 10 | Women and Children on Skid Row  The Weingart Center, Los Angeles Mission, Downtown Women’s Center, Good Shepherd Center, West Los Angeles, Upward Bound Family Place, Santa Monica, Cal. Family Housing, Inglewood | All team reporting updates | October 9 |
| Week 9  October 17 | In class workshopping: Teams One and Two present first drafts/rough cuts | Rough cuts, Teams One and Two | October 16 |
| Week 10  October 24 | In class workshopping: Teams Three and Four present first drafts/rough cuts | Rough cuts, Teams Three and Four | October 23 |
|  |  |  |  |
| Week 11  October 31 | In class workshopping: Teams One and Two present second drafts/rough cuts  Data/social media discussion and Website mockup | Second drafts/cuts, Teams One and Two | October 30 |
| Week 12  November 7 | In class workshopping: Teams Three and Four present second drafts/rough cuts | Second drafts/cuts, Teams Three and Four | November 6 |
| Week 13  November 14 | In class workshopping: All teams present final drafts/cuts | Final drafts/cuts, all teams | November 13 |
| Week 14  November 21 | No class, Thanksgiving. Individual meetings earlier in the week, TBA. |  |  |
| Week 15  November 28 | All teams: Trouble shooting, polishing final drafts and rough cuts.  Final review, data team: Website and social media output  Course evaluations. |  | November 27 |
| Final Exam Period  12/12, 11 a.m.-1 p.m. | No final exam. Final project will be the equivalent of a final exam. Due date 12/10. |  |  |

**IX. Policies and Procedures**

**Additional Policies**

**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 by 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://policy.usc.edu/scampus-part-b/>). 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://dps.usc.edu/contact/report/>). This is important for the safety of the whole USC community. Another member of the university community - such as a friend, classmate, adviser, or faculty member - can help initiate the report, or can initiate the report on behalf of another person.The *Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention and Services* (<https://engemannshc.usc.edu/rsvp/>) 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 adviser or program staff to find out more. Students whose primary language is not English should check with the *American Language Institute* (<http://ali.usc.edu/>) which sponsors courses and workshops specifically for international graduate students.

*The Office of Disability Services and Programs* (<http://dsp.usc.edu/>) provides certification for students with disabilities and helps arrange the relevant accommodations.

Students requesting test-related accommodations will need to share and discuss their DSP recommended accommodation letter/s with their faculty and/or appropriate departmental contact person at least three weeks before the date the accommodations will be needed. Additional time may be needed for final exams. Reasonable exceptions will be considered during the first three weeks of the semester as well as for temporary injuries and for students recently diagnosed. Please note that a reasonable period of time is still required for DSP to review documentation and to make a determination whether a requested accommodation will be appropriate.

*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.

**X. About Your Instructors**

**Mary Murphy** is a print and television journalist and the author of two books and has written hundreds of newspaper and magazine articles. Murphy was on the staff of The St. Louis Post-Dispatch, The Los Angeles Times, New York, Esquire and TV Guide Magazines. She has appeared on Today, Good Morning America and The O’Reilly Factor. She appeared nightly on *Entertainment* *Tonight*. Hollywood has only been part of her career as a journalist. Murphy has written extensively about the world of religious strife and heroism for Readers Digest International magazine. She has reported stories from Rwanda, Sri Lanka, The Philippines and Cambodia. She went to Mumbai, India, where she investigated the plight of the child stars of “Slumdog Millionaire,” a story that ran in the International Divisions of Readers Digest as well as on NBC’s Dateline. She spent weeks in the slums of New Delhi for a story about educated women teaching business skills to women in the slums. In a story closer to home Murphy traveled to a town in rural Texas to investigate how the hit and run killing of a 4-year-old child led to an incredible act of forgiveness that healed racial tensions between blacks and whites in the community. In June 2011 Fordham University/Marymount College honored Murphy as The Alumnae of Achievement. In 2014 Murphy was elected to the Board of Directors of Fordham/Marymount.

Besides her role as a journalist, Murphy’s has volunteered on skid row for over three decades. She chaired the communications and cultivations committee that produced a documentary about skid row hosted by Dick Van Dyke. Her excitement and passion for helping the people of Skid Row inspired Wallis Annenberg to make a major contribution to the Mission, naming its library in the new building in Mary’s honor. The Mary Murphy Library provides education to countless men and women who live on skid row. Mary has devoted much of her life to serving, counseling and mentoring women in need. The Midnight Mission honored Murphy at its annual Golden Heart Awards at the Beverly Hills Hotel for her work with the homeless.

**Sandy Tolan** is a radio and print journalist and the author of two books and has written for more than 40 newspapers and magazines, and produced hundreds of documentaries and features for NPR and Public Radio International.  Since 1982 he has reported from American Indian country, along the U.S.-Mexico border, across New England and the American West, in Latin America, the Middle East, the Balkans, Eastern Europe, and South and East Asia. A central focus of his work has been the intersection of land conflicts, racial and ethnic identity, natural resources, and the global economy.  He is a co-founder of Homelands Production (www.homelands.org), an independent production company focusing on documentary work for public radio. He was a lead producer for the Homelands series WORKING, monthly profiles on workers around the world broadcast on public radio's *Marketplace*, and Food for Nine Billion, about global food and hunger issues, a collaboration with *Marketplace* and the *Newshour.*  Sandy is the author of three books: *Me and Hank, A Boy and His Hero 25 Years Later*, an exploration of race and sports in America; and *The Lemon Tree: An Arab, A Jew, and the Heart of the Middle East*, a narrative history of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and *Children of the Stone*, about the building of a music school in the occupied West Bank (April 2015).