

JOUR 207: Writing and Reporting I 4 units

Concurrent Enrollment: JOUR 321

Spring 2019 – Thursdays – 9 a.m.-12:20 p.m.

Section: 21042D

Room: ANN 413

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Course Description:

Welcome to JOUR 207. The goals of this course are to sharpen your writing, reporting, and critical thinking skills, as well as teach you about news values, ethics, copy editing, interviewing, fact-checking, and how to accurately report and write about a diverse world *on deadline*.

This course will introduce you to the step-by-step process of producing news content, from understanding the concept of news judgment – when an event is news and why - to the research, reporting, writing and dissemination of news in a 21st century news ecosystem.

We believe students should begin by learning what makes a story newsworthy and what elements should be included in basic news stories. From there we'll move to the acquisition of basic news skills, including the writing of tweets, leads, briefs, shorter stories and the basics of interviewing, reporting/researching and fact-checking through a variety of campus-based assignments.

All students will complete online self-directed learning modules on Associated Press style and Grammar, Spelling and Punctuation **You** will learn how to copyedit the work of others and how to self-edit **our/your** own work. Finally, part of your training in this introductory newswriting and reporting course includes professionalism through a thorough review and discussion of codes of ethics.

You are expected to come to class on time, prepared (i.e., having done your readings and homework assignments), and **be** ready to discuss various news-related topics. If you're not already a newshound, it is strongly suggested that you become one. A good journalist knows what's happening in **their** city, state, country and around the world.

All homework assignments should be uploaded to Blackboard in a Word doc no later than one week after they are assigned (i.e., they are due before the next class session). Sometimes, deadlines will be even tighter. Instructors will return your edited homework and in-class assignments within a week, and often sooner.

Every student also is required to schedule a one-on-one meeting with the instructor sometime during the semester, ideally around Week 7 or 8. You're all welcome to meet with the instructor more often, of course. And each student is encouraged to meet at least once with the writing coach this semester.

By the end of this course, you will understand what makes an event newsworthy, and have the capability to produce accurate, well-written, well-sourced tweets and short news stories on deadline.

You will report and write news stories while also learning about some of the basic types of coverage media outlets focus on – crime, courts, disasters such as fires and earthquakes, government meetings, speeches, press conferences, and polls of **every** type.

In-class writing assignments will be pass/fail. If you miss class, you cannot make up an in-class assignment. In addition, homework assignments will be weighted more heavily in the second half of the semester, meaning they will count for a higher portion of your grade at the end of the semester as stories get more complex. You will be given the opportunity to rewrite one homework assignment (the two grades will be averaged).

Please note: You are *not* allowed to interview friends and family members for stories. And you are *not* allowed to misrepresent yourselves when seeking an interview (i.e., telling a source you are writing for The Daily Trojan or the Annenberg Media Center if you are not actually doing so). You are *not* allowed to submit single source stories unless given the okay by your instructor.

The course that follows, JOUR 307, will build on the skills learned in JOUR 207 and focus on longer enterprise stories.

Learning Objectives:

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- Demonstrate news judgment by Identifying newsworthy elements for tweets, leads and news stories
- Organize news stories
- Conduct research for news stories
- Conduct interviews for news stories (from initial introductions to follow-ups)
- Verify information for news stories
- Use the Fault Lines method to identify, report on and include diverse sources for news stories
- Demonstrate knowledge of various ethical issues that face journalists today
- Use correct AP Style, proper grammar, spelling and punctuation
- Produce news stories on deadline

Learning Assessments:

The learning objectives will be measured by

- Tweets
- News leads
- News briefs (one to three paragraphs in length)
- News stories (up to 500 words in length)
- Completion of AP modules on Blackboard
- Completion of GSP modules on Blackboard
- A midterm that includes grammar, spelling, punctuation, style and AP questions, questions about news ethics, and writing.
- Student-led team discussions about ethics
- Media critiques – “tear ups” -- of stories from USA Today and the Los Angeles Times
- A final written news story

Description of Assignments:

- Tweets: You will learn how to use social media for reporting, especially about live events, and developing sources. You also will learn how to use Twitter to have conversations with your audience and verify information.
- News leads: You will learn how to write an info-packed, yet readable news lead in a sentence of 35 words or less from a factsheet.

- News briefs: You will write short yet complete news stories, or briefs, of one to three paragraphs from a factsheet.
- News stories: You will research, report on, write and update 500-word news stories on deadline. We will start with factsheets, but then you will go out and report stories. The stories will be assigned by your instructor.
- AP/GSP modules on Blackboard: These self-paced modules must be completed before the midterm.
- Ethics Discussion: Students will be paired up and assigned a specific journalistic ethical question to research. In class, students will be responsible for leading a class discussion. (How to lead a class discussion and what is expected will be discussed in class, and an outline uploaded to Bb).
- Media tear-ups: Each week, a student will choose a story from CNN, the Los Angeles Times or USA Today to share with the class and discuss key questions about its production and merit. (How to lead a tear-up and what is expected will be discussed in class, and an outline uploaded to Bb).
- Midterm: At the midpoint of the semester, you will be tested on grammar, spelling, punctuation, AP Style, ethics and writing.
- Final: You will report and write a 500-word story on deadline.

Grading:

Assignments will be graded on accuracy, grammar, spelling, AP style, clarity, deadlines, conciseness, structure, proper punctuation, quality of interviews/reporting and use of quotes, if applicable, use of numbers, quality of sources, attribution, research, objectivity, etc.

You must abide by the Society of Professional Journalists Code of Ethics (<http://www.spj.org/ethicscode.asp>), NPPA (<https://nppa.org/ethics>), SND (<http://www.snd.org>) and the RTNDA Code of Ethics (http://www.rtdna.org/content/rtdna_code_of_ethics#.VTNMjItAwUU).

Assignments	% of Grade
(AP style, GSP modules. Must be completed by the midterm)	5%
In-Class Assignments (pass/fail)	10%
Homework Assignments (weighted more heavily at the end)	15%
Ethics Discussion (Done in teams of two)	5%
Media Tear-Ups	5%
MC Shift	15%
Midterm	20%
Final	25%
Total	100%

Annenberg Media Center requirement

You are required as an enrolled student in J207 to complete a four-hour weekly shift at the Annenberg Media Center. During your one continuous four-hour shift, you will produce daily content for TV, radio and web or practice community reporting skills. The work you produce during your shift accounts for 15 percent of your final grade in this class. More details about the Media Center requirement are found at the end of the syllabus.

REQUIRED ATTENDANCE FOR JOUR 207 STUDENTS

- You must NOTIFY the student manager in charge if you cannot make the appointed hours of your shift. The MC attendance policy and procedures will be provided at the start of the semester.

- Missed shifts must be made up within two weeks of your absence (religious holidays exempted). You must arrange with your designated student manager to make up your shift.
- Your instructor will receive alerts from the MC about any serious attendance issues by receive final attendance records by the last day of the official university final exam period.
- Failure to fulfill your obligations will affect the Media-Center-portion of your grade, which accounts for 15%.
- Students must also complete a weekly media center check in with their professors telling them what they accomplished during their shift as well as anything they learned or were unable to complete. The weekly check-in should be sent to your instructor (they will determine the delivery method) and be 2-3 paragraphs in length. If you work on a story that is published as a result of your work during the shift, please be sure to send the story link to your instructor.

Grading Scale

95% to 100%: A	80% to 83%: B-	67% to 69%: D+
90% to 94%: A-	77% to 79%: C+	64% to 66%: D
87% to 89%: B+	74% to 76%: C	60% to 63%: D-
84% to 86%: B	70% to 73%: C-	0% to 59%: F

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.

“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.

Assignment Submission Policy

- A. All assignments are due on the dates specified. Lacking prior discussion and agreement with the instructor, late assignments will automatically be given a grade of F.
- B. Assignments must be submitted on Blackboard.

Additional Policies

1. All readings assigned for that day should be completed *before* each class. Late assignments will not be accepted.
2. Homework needs to be posted on Blackboard in a Word doc on the day it’s due.
3. Always save all assignments and handouts. Keep them organized and bring them to class.
4. Read and RE-READ all handouts. You will write better.
5. Students may rewrite **one** homework or in class assignment that received a low grade. The recorded grade on the rewritten assignment will be the average between the new and old grades. (An “F” on the original and an “A” on the rewrite would be a “C”.) I will return your graded assignments on a timely basis with comments and suggested corrections. If you don’t understand a comment or correction, or you disagree, see your instructor.
6. There will be timed assignments that can **only** be completed in class. Make-up assignments for the in-class work will **not** be possible. You cannot be late on a story and you should not be late to class. *Please alert your instructor if you’re going to be late or miss a class for personal emergencies or illness.*
7. Accuracy is the number one priority. Your reputation as a journalist and the reputation of the news organization you work for hangs in the balance. Is the information accurate, is the grammar correct, are the names spelled correctly? Have you identified the sources of your report? Is the writing style conversational? Have you written a lead that will grab the viewers’ attention? Is the style and tone appropriate for the report?
8. In addition to being ethical in developing and writing your stories, it is important that you also consider diversity. When looking at your work, you should consider who is involved and how it will impact others. Is your work fair and does it represent all stakeholders in a balanced manner? This class will help you learn how to write in a manner that includes diverse viewpoints. The class will discuss socioeconomic/class, race/ethnicity, religion, gender/sexual orientation, geography and generations in the context of current events and journalism.

Required Readings and Supplementary Materials

Title: *Inside Reporting: A Practical Guide to the Craft of Journalism* (2012)
 Author: Tim Harrower.
 McGraw-Hill, 3rd edition, 2012
 ISBN: 978-0073526171

“The Associated Press Stylebook and Briefing on Media Law,” edited by Darrell Christian, Sally Jacobsen and David Minthorn 2018

The following Diversity Stylebooks are on Bb:

National Center of Disability and Journalism: <http://ncdj.org/style-guide/>

LGBT Terminology: <https://www.nlgia.org/stylebook/>

NAJA Styleguide: <https://www.naja.com/resources/naja-ap-style-guide/>

NABJ Styleguide: <https://www.nabj.org/page/styleguide>

AAJA Styleguide: <http://sjsujmc.com/MCOM285/alaban/2018/03/29/aajas-guide-to-covering-asian-america/>

Immigration Styleguide: https://www.raceforward.org/sites/default/files/DTIW_update_JournalistStyleGuide4.pdf

NOTE: Please see additional reading links embedded in the syllabus.

Suggested Readings:

As journalists, it is imperative you become a daily news consumer. Watch, read and check news sources every day. You must follow the news and be familiar with what is going on around the world, the country, California, and Los Angeles. You should read the LA Times and New York Times EVERY DAY.

Develop a list of other news sources you check daily, sign up for newsletters and download apps from news organizations.

Follow at least three news organizations on Twitter and sign up for three push alerts. Here are a few I suggest but feel free to choose based on likes and future interests. @AP, @washingtonpost @THR (The Hollywood Reporter), @latimes, @ABC, @CBSNews, @NBCNews, @nytimes, @BBCWorld, @reuters, @CNN, @HuffPost, @theskimm, @LAist, @LAMag, @FoxNews, @NPR, @KPCC

Watch at least one national and local newscast every day:

NBC Nightly News, CBS Evening News, ABC World News, KABC, KCBS/KCAL, KNBC, KTLA, KTTV

Listen to NPR

KPCC/Southern California Public Radio

Add these news organizations on Instagram and watch their Stories:

The Guardian

CNN

New York Times

Helpful websites:

BBC Social Media Academy: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/academy/journalism/skills/social-media>

Media Shift: <http://www.pbs.org/mediashift/>

Journalist's Toolbox: <http://www.journalisttoolbox.org/archive/mobile-journalism/>

NPPA: <https://nppa.org>

SPJ: <http://www.spj.org>

NPR training: <http://training.npr.org/category/social-media/>

NPR Social Media Code of Ethics: <http://ethics.npr.org/tag/social-media/>

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: 1/7/19 – 4/26/19)

Friday, January 25: Last day to register and add classes for Session 001

Friday, January 25: 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 29: last day to drop a Monday-only class without a mark of “W” and receive a refund for Session 001

Friday, February 22: 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 5: 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.*

Week 1 – Jan. 10 – Journalism: The Most Interesting Job in the World

Introductions – Why do you want to be a journalist?

Review syllabus

AP and GSP Modules – What are they? How do they work? Must be completed by Feb. 28 (Midterm).

What is AP Style? Why do we care?

What about journalism ethics? Why ethics are more important today than ever.

Students pair up and sign up for ethics discussions. What are ethics discussions? How do they work? What’s expected?

Individual students sign up for tear up discussions. What is a tear-up? How do they work? What’s expected?

What makes an event or a person newsworthy? How do you develop news judgment? There’s a universal framework that still works for most publications, although media outlets vary in what they emphasize.

What is Twitter? How does newsworthiness apply to Tweets? How do journalists use Twitter to report, find sources, verify information and talk to their audience? What’s the best writing style for Twitter? What are the best practices for Tweeting?

In-Class:

Students will watch a press conference and “live tweet” it (write all Tweets on a Word doc, then upload the entire doc to Bb). At least 12 tweets are required.

Homework:

Watch another news event that has been uploaded to BB. Live tweet it (write all Tweets on a Word doc, then upload the entire doc to Bb). At least six tweets are required.

Readings:

From Text:

Harrower, Chapters 7 and 8.

On Bb:

SPJ Code of Ethics at <http://www.spj.org/ethicscode.asp>

ONA Code of Ethics at <http://journalists.org/?page=onamission>

<https://www.poynter.org/news/what-every-young-journalist-should-know-about-using-twitter>

<https://www.nyguild.org/front-page-details/basic-best-practices-for-journalists-on-twitter>

<https://www.poynter.org/news/twitter-dustups-are-reminder-journalists-you-are-what-you-tweet>

USA Today story -- TBD

Week 2 – Jan. 17 – From a Tweet to a Lead

Ethics Discussion

Tear-Up session
Review Tweets

Moving from tweets to *news leads* is different. Not difficult. Just different. Tweets let your personality shine through. Hard news leads are more formulaic, at least at first. But the formula works, especially on deadline.

Review Who, what, when, where, why and how

As a beginner, try to write basic news leads that are one sentence long and 35 words or shorter. Yes, news leads can be much longer and very complex. But again, as beginners, it's best to start with a clean, accurate and easy-to-read one-sentence lead.

At the very least, make sure your lead includes the what, who, when and where – and a source. If you can fit in the why and how, great. If not, save it for later.

In-Class:

Write several leads.

Homework:

Write several leads.

Readings:

From Text:

Harrower, Chapter 3, Pgs. 36-47.

Week 3 – Jan. 24 – Supporting your Lead; News Briefs, Quotes

Ethics Discussion

Tear-up session

Review leads

What comes after your lead? The supporting paragraph. In other words, the second paragraph has to support whatever you put in your lead. This can be done with a quote from a source/expert, a paraphrase with more info, or data that's attributed to a source.

For longer stories, there's also the "nut graf," but we'll get to that later in the semester.

And don't forget the "why" and "how." Even if you mentioned it in the lead, these two items usually require more explanation.

Another key to longer stories, even short ones, is the killer quote. How do you choose good ones?

News briefs can be one paragraph to three paragraphs long. Each paragraph can be one to three sentences long.

There's no exact formula. Use your critical thinking skills to determine what your audience needs to know.

Story structure is based on the inverted pyramid, where the most pressing information goes at the top.

In-class:

News Briefs and Tweets.

Homework:

News Briefs and Tweets.

Readings:

Text:

Harrower, Chapter 3, Pg. 41-53.; 82-85.

Week 4 – Jan. 31 – Copy Editing; Self-Editing, Fault Lines

Ethics Discussion

Tear-up session

Review briefs

“Fewer Copy Editors, More Errors,” declared the headline over the July 5 [column](#) by *Washington Post* ombudsman Andrew Alexander – 10 years ago. Two years before that, The *Orlando Sentinel* carried the headline “Errors expose need for editing.” Things haven’t gotten any better. That means you have to be your own editor. And if you ever want to move up into top management at a news organization, having copy editing skills will serve you well. As reports and editors, you must also be mindful to be inclusive when it comes to coverage of your community and including a wide range of voices in your stories. We will use the Maynard Institute’s Fault Lines approach to think about issues of generation, gender, class, race/ethnicity, geography and access to technology.

In-Class:

You will be given a raw story to copy edit. You must correct all AP Style, grammar, spelling and punctuation errors. And you must point out any flaws in logic or reporting holes.

Homework:

You will be given a raw story to copy edit. You must correct all AP Style, grammar, spelling and punctuation errors. And you must point out any flaws in logic or reporting holes.

Readings:

From Text:

Harrower, Chapters 1, 2, 3 (Pgs. 54-66).

On Bb:

Self-Editing Tips for Journalists

<https://ijinet.org/en/resource/self-editing-tips-journalists>

Copyediting for Reporters: How to Get the Basics Right

<https://journalistsresource.org/tip-sheets/style/copyediting-for-reporters>

Diversity Toolbox – Fault Lines

<https://www.spj.org/dtb2.asp>

Week 5 – Feb. 7 – Writing short news stories, more on updates, sidebars

Ethics Discussion

Tear-up session

Review copy edits

Moving from a three-paragraph news brief to a 300- to 500-word story is not that much of a leap. The key is organization. It involves expanding on and supporting the 5 w’s and h with data and quotes.

We will review updates to stories, and how they are done in real time.

We also will discuss how to think about “sidebars” or other related stories to the main story.

In-Class:

You will write a short news story on deadline. You will list a sidebar idea for the main story. Include a tweet.

Homework:

You will write a short news story on deadline. You will list a sidebar idea for the main story. Include a tweet.

Readings:

From Text:

Harrower, Pgs. 50-64.

Week 6 – Feb. 14 – Reporting basics and Interviewing, from the initial “ask” to the follow-up

Ethics Discussion
Tear-up session
Review copy edits

Reporting can involve stories that are “breaking” and that you are sent out on, and stories that you propose yourself. In both cases, you must spend whatever time you have to find sources, primary and secondary, to help with your reporting and writing. You must learn to use the web, improve your observational skills, take notes as well as use recording devices for notes, photos and video, and most important, learn about interviewing, from the initial “ask: to the “follow-up.”

In-Class:

Review stories with excellent interviews.
Role-play in pairs an “ask” for an interview.
Write an e-mail request for an interview.

Homework:

Send an email to a local reporter from any news outlet, asking for a brief (15-minute) interview for this class. The topic – what do young journalists need to master to succeed in the world of journalism today? Write a story or a Q&A of no more than 500 words. Include a tweet.

Readings:

From Text:

Harrower, Pgs. 68-85.

Week 7 – Feb. 21 – Review for midterm

Ethics Discussion
Tear-up session
Review interview exercise

Review for midterm – AP Style, GSP, Ethics, Fault Lines, basics of reporting, interviewing and writing.

Homework:

Review your edited work so far; review AP and GSP, review ethics notes, read USA Today and the Los Angeles Times.

Week 8 – Feb. 28 – Midterm

Week 9 – March 7 – Covering Speeches

Review midterm

Covering speeches is more than stenography. Reporters need to conduct background research on the speaker, the topic, why the person is speaking, and verify what the speaker says. Reporters also must convey what they say accurately, fairly and in an interesting manner.

In-Class:

You will write about a speech in class. We will discuss how to verify the information from the speaker.

Homework:

You will cover an on-campus speech. You must include background on the speaker and topic, a quote from the organizer of the speech, and a quote from a member of the audience – all in 500 words. Include a tweet. The speech must be approved by your instructor.

Readings:**From Text:**

Harrower, Pgs. 106-107

SPRING BREAK!!**Week 10 – March 21 – Covering meetings and news conferences**

Ethics Discussion

Tear-up session

Review speech exercise

Covering meetings and news conferences are very similar to covering speeches. The major differences are that meetings and news conferences often have *several* speakers instead of *one* speaker, which adds to the level of complexity. In addition, several different, but related, topics may be covered. It is the job of the reporter to use his/her critical thinking and news judgment skills to choose the most noteworthy to feature in the lead and story. Often this includes getting a hold of the meeting agenda beforehand and getting up to speed on items that are listed.

In-class:

You will write about a news conference. Include a tweet.

Homework:

You will find a local off-campus meeting – community board, city council, education meeting, zoning board – and cover the proceedings. You must obtain the agenda beforehand, you may go in pairs or teams, but you must each separately write a 500-word story and include a tweet.

Readings:**From Text:**

Harrower, Pgs. 108-110.

Week 11 – March 28 – Covering crime

Ethics Discussion

Tear-up session

Review meeting exercise

Crime and public safety are top concerns. Covering them accurately and not sensationalizing stories is key, however. So is avoiding stereotypes, keeping victims safe, treating suspects and minors fairly, and learning how to interview victims and witnesses of trauma in a sensitive manner.

In-Class

You will write a crime story.

Homework:

You must contact a local police, sheriff's or CHP station and request a ride-along with an officer. USC's DPS does not count. If you obtain one, your job is to talk to the officers during the ride-along about their job and how they see the press helping/hinder their job. If you do not obtain a ride-along, request an interview with a press officer for the police, sheriff and CHP about the same topic. Find out how these offices generally work with the press. Write no more than 500 words and include a tweet.

Readings:**From Text:**

Harrower, Pgs. 102-103

Week 12 – April 4 – Covering courts

Ethics Discussion

Tear-up session

Review ride-along/interview exercise

After a suspect is charged, the court reporter takes over from the cop reporter. Learning about how civil and criminal courts work is imperative no matter what beat you cover, be it sports or celebrities or business. You also find stories about social justice gone wrong or inspiring stories of redemption. There are heartbreaking murder trials, important legal rulings and incredible human-interest stories.

In-Class:

We will watch a video and cover a court story.

Homework:

You will sit in on a trial and write what you can. Do not attend arraignments. They are too short. You can try night court, though. If it's an actual story, great. Otherwise, write about the experience – how you find out about the trial, where it was, who the judge was, who the prosecutors were, who the defendant was, what it was about. You may also do this in pairs but must write separate assignments. Include a tweet.

Readings:

From Text:

Harrower, Pgs. 104-105.

From Bb;

About California Courts

<http://www.courts.ca.gov/2113.htm>

Week 13 – April 11 – Covering local government

Ethics Discussion

Tear-up session

Review court story

Reports cover the actions of municipal agencies and departments and the interplay of citizens, interest groups and local governments in making policy. Some of these stories include budgets, taxes, bond issues, politics, zoning and planning, and education. Reporters are watchdogs, making sure city agencies and departments are carrying out their responsibilities efficiently, effectively and economically.

In-class:

You will write about a city's budget in class. Include a tweet.

Homework:

You will obtain a copy of a local city's budget (not Los Angeles – pick something smaller, like Inglewood or Culver City) and write a 500-word story. Include quotes from at least two people. Include a tweet.

Readings:

From Text:

Harrower, Pgs. 86-88; 110-111

Week 14 – April 18 – Covering polls and other numbers

Ethics Discussion
Tear-up session
Review government story

Regardless of beat, journalists often write about public opinion polls, which are designed to measure the public's attitudes about an issue or idea. Researchers frequently conduct national polls to better understand how Americans feel about public policy topics such as gun control, immigration reform and decriminalizing drug use. When covering polls, it's important for journalists to try to gauge the quality of a poll and make sure claims made about the results actually match the data collected. Sometimes, pollsters overgeneralize or exaggerate their findings. Sometimes, flaws in the way they choose participants or collect data make it tough to tell what the results really mean.

In-class

You will write about a poll. Include a tweet.

Homework:

You will write a 500-word story about a poll (it will be your job to find one). Include a quote from someone who released the poll, and someone who may not agree with the poll. Include a tweet.

Readings:

On Bb:

11 Questions Journalists Should Ask About Polls

<https://journalistsresource.org/tip-sheets/reporting/public-opinion-polls-tips-journalists>

Week 15 – April 25 – Covering accidents, fires, earthquakes and other disasters

Ethics Discussion
Tear-up session
Review poll story

Some of the most difficult stories reporters cover are accidents, earthquakes and other disasters that involve injuries, the loss of property and life. Reporters and newsrooms have to have a plan in the event of such events. Reporters also have to know where to go to get information, how to take care of themselves, and how to deal with victims.

In-Class:

You will write a story about a big accident. Include a tweet.

Homework:

Work on a 500-word Final, which must include a tweet.

Readings:

From Text:

Harrower, Pgs. 98-101

May 7, 8-10 a.m. – FINAL

CLASSES END – April 26

STUDY DAYS – April 27-30

FINALS – May 1-8

COMMENCEMENT – May 10

IX. Policies and Procedures

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://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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Office of Disability Services and Programs

Provides certification for students with disabilities and helps arrange relevant accommodations. 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

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

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

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

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 Instructor

Laura Castañeda, Ed.D., is a Professor of Professional Practice. She has been a staff writer and columnist for *The San Francisco Chronicle* and *The Dallas Morning News*, and a staff writer and editor at *The Associated Press* in San Francisco, New York and Mexico. She has freelanced for a range of publications including *The New York Times*, *USA Today's Hispanic Living* and *Back to School* magazines, and *TheAtlantic.com*, among others. Scholarly articles have appeared in the journals *Media Studies* and *Journalism and Mass Communication Educator*. She co-authored "The Latino Guide to Personal Money Management" (Bloomberg Press 1999) and co-edited "News and Sexuality: Media Portraits of Diversity" (Sage Publications 2005). She earned undergraduate degrees in journalism and international relations from USC, a master's degree in international political economy from Columbia University, and was awarded a Knight-Bagehot Fellowship in business and economics reporting from Columbia University. Her doctorate is from USC's Rossier School of Education. She served as Associate Director of the J-School for four years before returning to faculty.