



**JOUR 517: Advanced Investigative
Reporting
3 Units**

Spring 2019 – Mondays – 5-7:30 p.m.

Section: 21110

Location: ASC 328

Instructor: Mark Schoofs

Office Hours: By appointment

(usually 3:00-4:45 p.m. Mondays, ANN 204-A)

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I. Course Description

The goal of this course is to inspire you and teach you the practical skills, ethical principles, and mindset that will allow you to become a successful investigative journalist — and/or how to dominate your beat and out-hustle and outsmart all your competitors.

The focus of the class will be on learning by doing, pursuing an investigative project that uses your own original reporting to uncover wrongdoing, betrayal trust, or harm — and to present that story in a way that is so explosive and compelling that it demands action.

As you pursue that story, I will act as your editor and treat you as if you were members of a real investigations team. I will expect from you persistence, rigor, creativity, and a drive to break open a big story. You can expect from me professional-level guidance on strategizing about reporting and writing, candid feedback on what is going well and what needs improvement, and rigorous editing.

By pursuing this project — as well as through other work in the class — you will learn:

- How to choose an explosive subject for investigation.
- How to identify human sources and persuade even reluctant ones to talk with you.
- How to protect sources — and yourself.
- How to find and use documents.
- How to organize large amounts of material and present it in a fair and compelling way.
- How to bulletproof your stories so that would-be libel lawyers slump in despair.
- What the legal and ethical pitfalls are — and how to avoid them.
- What kind of pushback to expect and how to counter it.

This class is intended to give you a strong foundation of reporting and writing. But while the focus will be on learning practical skills, you should also develop a better understanding of the principles of investigative journalism, its place in a free society, and the main challenges that investigative reporters face.

There will be classroom and outside assignments designed to teach you various skills, and some assignments may require going to courthouses and locations in the Los Angeles area where public records are available. You will be required to file at least one Freedom of Information Act or other open records request every week — building up a treasure trove of documents that will give you a head start as you step into (or back into) a real newsroom.

You will also be expected to help your fellow classmates by reading their updates, memos, and drafts and by giving them your best advice and suggestions.

Most important: You will also be required to propose, report, and write — or produce in audio or video — one in-depth digital investigative story. (You may do this as part of a team, as long as you get prior clearance from the instructor, and as long as you clearly document which student conducted each interview, obtained and analyzed data or documentary sources, and contributed to the writing (or filming/recording) of the final project.)

Your final story should be between 2,500 and 3,500 words long, or the equivalent for audio or video. It must include a significant amount of original reporting, and it must uncover something in the public interest. You will be expected to write periodic memos about your progress on the project, and to discuss your progress and challenges in class. You should have a topic in mind by the first day of class; a completed final project is due April 18, a few days before the last day of class; your rewrite is due during Finals Week.

The goal of the semester-long project is to help you learn investigative techniques while pursuing a groundbreaking investigative story. A further goal is to get your project published, and I will work with you to help you get your project published in a campus or professional publication.

II. Overall Learning Objectives and Assessment

By the end of the course you should achieve the following:

- Understanding of enterprise and investigative journalism and the role of an investigative reporter.
- Ability to generate story ideas for investigative and in-depth stories.
- Ability to identify, develop, and protect human sources.
- Ability to conduct productive interviews, even with reluctant sources.
- Ability to identify and use documents and databases — both electronic and paper.
- An advanced ability to use, the federal Freedom of Information Act and state open records and meetings laws.

- Ability to organize large amounts of material.
- Ability to write and present in-depth material in a compelling way.
- Ability to bulletproof your stories and withstand aggressive legal and PR pushback.
- Ability to plan for photos and graphics to illustrate in-depth stories.
- Ability to work in collaboration with other journalists, as part of a team reporting effort.
- Sensitivity to diversity issues in reporting and writing in-depth and investigative stories.
- Commitment to accuracy, integrity, and fair play. Understanding of ethical and legal challenges involved in investigative reporting.

III. Description of Assignments

There will be a variety of assignments:

- In- class assignments: Research and writing assignments to be completed during class.
- Weekly assignments: Research and writing assignments to be completed by the specified deadline, usually prior to the following class period.
- Final project: An in-depth investigative story presented in digital, broadcast ,or text format.

You should begin thinking immediately about the topic of your final project, which must be submitted for approval as indicated. After that week, you are expected to file weekly updates on your reporting progress and plans for your project. Part of your final project grade is based on the quality of these updates and the critical thinking you demonstrate in investigating your subject.

You will submit your final project at three times: as a rough draft for in-class review; as a completed final project (this version is worth 20 percent of your course grade); and a rewrite (this version is worth 30 percent of your course grade).

IV. Grading

a. Breakdown of Grade

Your grade will be determined by the quality of your assignments and your participation in class:

Assignment	Points	% of Grade
Final project	100	20
Final project rewrite	100	30

Assignment	Points	% of Grade
Other assignments	10 each	40
Class participation	100	10
TOTAL		100%

b. Grading Scale

Projects will generally be assigned a letter grade, which is then converted to a numeric grade.

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

c. Grading Standards

Reporting/writing assignments should be of publishable quality. All assignments will be edited on a professional basis. Each will be returned with written comments and explanations of any editing. You will be judged first on the accuracy and fairness of your stories. You will then be evaluated for writing or broadcast style, clarity, and originality. Our style guide will be *The Associated Press Stylebook and Briefing on Media Law*. Your copy, whether in the form of a story or memo, should not contain any errors in spelling, style, grammar, or fact. There should not be any omissions, either. Any misspelled proper noun (even if it's due to a typographical error) or an inaccuracy will result in an automatic "F" on that assignment. Any factual error also will result in an automatic "F" on the assignment. Accuracy is the first law of journalism, and professional journalists are also expected to spell and punctuate correctly, and to write with proper grammar and syntax. The story you produce as part of your final project, as well as some of the assignments given, must be accompanied by a complete list of sources. These should include titles, phone numbers and email addresses for anyone quoted. Web sites must have URLs. Printed sources must have bibliographical information. We may randomly fact-check your work during the semester by using these source lists, calling your sources to thank them for their help and requesting feedback. Stories that are not accompanied by source lists will receive an F. Stories with partial source lists will be graded down.

"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

- A. All assignments are due on the dates and times specified. Lacking prior discussion and agreement with the instructor, late assignments will automatically be given a grade of F.
- B. Written assignments should be shared as a Google Doc, with an email alert sent to schoofs@usc.edu. Please make sure your name and contact information is on all attachments.
- C. Multimedia assignments should be submitted as specified for each individual assignment.

VI. Required Readings and Supplementary Materials

Required textbooks:

The Investigative Reporter's Handbook: A Guide to Documents, Databases and Techniques, 5th Edition, by Brant Houston, Len Bruzzese and Steve Weinberg. You may substitute an earlier edition.

All the President's Men, by Carl Bernstein and Bob Woodward

The Associated Press Stylebook and Briefing on Media Law, by Associated Press

Bad Blood, By John Carreyrou

Additional required reading: There will frequently be additional reading material, usually distributed online. Much of this material will be investigative stories/case studies. You will be expected to read this material, and bring in written questions about it.

Other resources: If you need access to broadcast equipment or Web-server space not accessible to you through another class or learning lab, please work with your instructor as soon as possible.

News consumption: You should read at least one daily newspaper every day, review online news resources daily, and be familiar with daily news broadcasts.

VII. Laptop Policy

The class will have a policy of no screens. Yes, you should bring your laptop to class, because occasionally we will do exercises that require going online. (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](#) for more information. To connect to USC's Secure Wireless network, please visit USC's [Information Technology Services](#) website.)

But at all other times, phones, laptops, and other electronic devices must be put away. Why? With a hat tip to Gabe Kahn, the following will help explain:

- * ["Why you should take notes by hand – not on a laptop"](#)
- * ["The Case for Banning Laptops in the Classroom"](#)
- * Studies of the late Stanford University Professor Cliff Nass that show the dangers of multitasking (summarized in this [NPR segment](#))
- * ["How Smartphones Hijack Our Minds: Research suggests that as the brain grows dependent on phone technology, the intellect weakens"](#)
- * The *Los Angeles Times* article on an ["off the grid" policy](#).
- * ["The Myth of Multitasking"](#)

Please note: the no-screens policy means that when assigned a reading from the web, you need to bring a printout to class.

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.*

NOTE: Before the first class, please do the following:

Write two investigative story pitches, and email them to me no later than **9:00 am, on Monday, January 7**. Make each of these a story you believe you might actually pursue for the class. (If you took 539, you should already have a strong pitch.) If you would like to team up with another student on one or both of your pitches, that's fine — but you must be prepared to actually work together on the story. Be prepared to share your pitches and discuss them in class.

Each pitch should have the following seven elements:

- 1) A headline that makes me want to read it.
- 2) A summary sentence that starts with, "The story is that..." (Do not write, "The story is about...")
- 3) A concise description of the story, no more than 600 words.
- 4) State the minimum story you think you can get.
- 5) State the maximum story you think you can get.
- 6) List sources — human, data, and documents — that you **already** have.
- 7) List sources that you expect you will be able to get during the semester.

In the first class, we will discuss two stories, so please read them (and don't forget to bring printouts to class.) Go to <https://www.pulitzer.org/winners/washington-post-notably-work-katherine-boo> and read "System Loses Lives and Trust" and "How the Dead Were Found."

	Topics/Daily Activities	Readings and Homework	Deliverable/Due Dates
Week 1 Jan. 7	<p>Introduction and course overview: Why we're here, what we'll do, how we'll do it, what is the place of investigative reporting today?</p> <p>Guided discussion: What are investigative reporters? Where do investigations come from? What makes a good investigative story?</p> <p>Where to look for ideas and how to get started.</p> <p>Discussion of the Washington Post stories</p> <p>Discussion of your story ideas</p> <p>In class exercise: Reading an autopsy report – autopsyfiles.org</p>	<p>Assignment: Interview an investigative reporter about one of her or his stories and write 750 words on how they found that story and how they obtained and analyzed one document that was crucial to proving the thesis of the story. Write it as if it were a publishable story — in AP style, with a lede and a nut. Be prepared to discuss it in class. Due Monday, January 14, 9:00 a.m. Graded.</p> <p>Assignment: File a FOIA (and turn it in) by 5:00 p.m. on Thursday. Ungraded but will be factored into your class participation. NOTE: Choose an address that will be valid for at least one year.</p> <p>Assignment: Refine your story pitches. Be preparing for which one you will choose. Ungraded but will be factored into your class participation. Due Monday, January 14, 9:00 a.m., and share with the class.</p>	<p>Thursday, January 10, 5:00 p.m.: FOIA due.</p> <p>Monday, January 14, 9:00 a.m.: Interview with investigative reporter and refined story pitches due.</p> <p>Come to class on January 14 with printouts of the readings and your classmates' story pitches. Be prepared to discuss the pitches, the LA Times investigation of USC, chapters 1-3 of the Investigative Reporter's Handbook, and the readings on strategies for persuading sources to talk.</p>

		<p>READINGS: <u>Bring <i>All the President's Men</i> to class!</u></p> <p>The LA Times investigation of USC. Note: Circle all sources, human and documentary.</p> <p>"An overdose, a young companion, drug-fueled parties: The secret life of a USC med school dean." https://www.latimes.com/local/california/la-me-usc-doctor-20170717-htmllstory.html.</p> <p>"A USC doctor was accused of bad behavior with young women for years. The university let him continue treating students." https://www.latimes.com/projects/la-me-usc-clinic-doctor-patients/.</p> <p>(Non-required extra reading: Former USC medical school dean saw patients after using meth, investigators allege. https://www.latimes.com/local/lanow/la-me-usc-medical-school-dean-20171018-story.html. A creepy feeling, a sideways glance – patients of accused former USC gynecologist share their stories. https://www.latimes.com/projects/la-me-usc-clinic-doctor-patients/)</p> <p>Investigative Reporter's Handbook, Introduction and chapters 1-3</p> <p>Loosening Lips: https://j228sp10.wordpress.com/readings-2/eric-nadler-on-the-art-of-the-interview/</p> <p>Tips for persuading reluctant news sources to talk: https://stevebuttry.wordpress.com/2016/03/10/tips-for-persuading-reluctant-news-sources-to-talk/</p> <p>Eric Nalder's advice on interviewing reluctant sources: https://stevebuttry.wordpress.com/2016/03/10/tips-for-persuading-reluctant-news-sources-to-talk/</p>	<p><u>Make sure to bring printouts of all readings and your copy of <i>All The President's Men</i>.</u></p>
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		016/03/15/eric-nalders-advice-on-interviewing-reluctant-sources/ Anonymous Sources Bring Down a Senator: http://ajrarchive.org/Article.asp?id=2102	
Week 2 Jan. 14	Discuss the <i>LA Times</i> USC investigation. Discuss highlights of interviews with investigative reporters. Discuss revised story pitches. Guided discussion: the art of interviewing, part 1. Documents are the core of investigative reporting — but the best documents often come from sources, and virtually all documents need verification, interpretation, and analysis. How to get sources to talk.	Assignments: File a FOIA (and turn it in) by 5:00 p.m. on Thursday. Ungraded but will be part of your class participation. Final story pitch due 9:00 a.m. on Monday, February 4. This is the story you will be working on for the rest of the semester, so it should be honed show real reporting traction. Graded. Write a detailed reporting plan, including sources (human, data, and documents) that you plan to pursue. Due 9:00 a.m. on Monday, February 4. Share with the class. Graded. Read: Trump Engaged in Suspect Tax Schemes as He Reaped Riches From His Father. https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2018/10/02/us/politics/donald-trump-tax-schemes-fred-trump.html . Circle all sources, human and documentary. Also read these articles (no need to circle sources): Brett Kavanaugh’s nomination: A timeline. http://www.cnn.com/interactive/2018/10/politics/timeline-kavanaugh/ , The New York Times Bombshell That Bombed. https://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2018/10/09/new-york-times-trump-taxes-221144 Why No Scandal Has Stuck To Trump. https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/annehelenpetersen/donald-trump-new-york-times-taxes-scandals .	Thursday, January 17, 5:00 p.m.: FOIA due. Monday, January 28, 9:00 a.m.: Final story pitch and reporting plan due. Come to class on January 28 with printouts of the readings and your colleagues’ reporting plans. Be prepared to discuss them.

		<p>Principles of Persuasion: https://www.influenceatwork.com/principles-of-persuasion/ An Alternative Framework for Agent Recruitment: From MICE to RASCLS. https://www.cia.gov/library/center-for-the-study-of-intelligence/csi-publications/csi-studies/studies/vol.-57-no.-1-a/vol.-57-no.-1-a-pdfs/Burkett-MICE%20to%20RASCALS.pdf</p> <p>Investigative Reporter's Handbook, chapter 5.</p>	
Week 3 Jan. 21	NO CLASS — MARTIN LUTHER KING DAY.		
Week 4 Jan 28	<p>Discuss <i>NY Times</i> Trump investigation. Why didn't it hit, and what does that say about the power and limits of investigative reporting in our time?</p> <p>Discuss reporting plans.</p> <p>The art of interviewing, part 2. How to find sources, background them, and maintain them — even when you write things they hate.</p>	<p>Assignments: File a FOIA (and turn it in) by 5:00 p.m. on Thursday, January 31. Ungraded but will be factored into your class participation.</p> <p>Write a backgrounder, no more than 750 words, on one of your sources. Include what that source is, why s/he is important to your story, what motivation(s) s/he might have to speak, and at least five people to interview about your source and their relationship to him/her. Due 9:00 am on Friday, February 1. Graded.</p> <p>Write a short update on your reporting for your main story, detailing what progress you've made what obstacles you've encountered, and what major new information you have uncovered. Due Monday, February 11, 9:00 a.m. Share with class. Ungraded but will be factored into your class participation.</p> <p>Read: Investigative Reporter's Handbook, chapters 12, 13, *and* the chapter(s) most relevant to your story pitch. Bring to class a written insight or question about the chapter(s) most relevant to your pitch.</p>	<p>Thursday, January 31, 5:00 p.m.: FOIA due.</p> <p>Friday, February 1, 9:00 a.m.: Source backgrounder due.</p> <p>Monday, February 4, 9:00 a.m.: Updates due.</p> <p>Come to class on February 4 with printouts of the readings and your colleagues' story updates. Be prepared discuss these.</p>

		<p>Read all the stories for the Daily Breeze's Pulitzer-winning series: https://www.pulitzer.org/winners/rob-kuznia-rebecca-kimitch-and-frank-suraci. Circle all sources, human and documentary. Bring questions for Rob Kuznia, who will be our guest lecturer next week!</p> <p>In God's Name: https://www.tampabay.com/news/publicsafety/religious-exemption-at-some-florida-childrens-homes-shields-prying-eyes/1258390. Circle all sources, human and documentary.</p> <p>How I got the story. (No need to circle sources.) https://www.rcfp.org/browse-media-law-resources/news-media-law/news-media-and-law-spring-2013/how-i-got-story-alexandra-z</p>	
<p>Week 5 Feb. 4</p>	<p>Publicly available documents — investigative gold hidden in plain sight.</p> <p>Guest lecturer: Rob Kuznia</p> <p>In-class assignment: Brainstorm what public documents are available for your projects.</p> <p>How to organize your material and fact-check. Timeline. Hypothesis. Supporting evidence. Opposing evidence. Unknowns (holes in the reporting.) "What if?" Point your fact-checker to the exact supporting evidence, but give context. DocumentCloud. Consider Scrivener.</p> <p>Discuss readings.</p>	<p>Assignments: Possible public records assignment TBD.</p> <p>File a FOIA (and turn it in) by 5:00 p.m. on Thursday, February 7. Ungraded but will be factored into your class participation.</p> <p>Write a story memo that includes all fact-checking material. Due Friday, February 8 at 9:00 a.m. Share with class. Graded.</p> <p>Reading: A story by Jason Leopold, to be assigned. As always, circle all sources. Also, come to class with questions for Jason!</p> <p>In Immigrant Children's Shelters, Sexual Assault Cases Are Open and Shut. Circle all sources. https://www.propublica.org/article/broystown-immigrant-childrens-shelter-sexual-assault</p>	<p>Thursday, February 7, 5:00 p.m.: FOIA due.</p> <p>Friday, February 8, 9:00 a.m.: Story memo with fact-checking material due.</p> <p>Come to class February 11 with printouts of the readings and your classmates' story memos. Be prepared to discuss these and to ask Jason Leopold, a.k.a. the "FOIA terrorist," questions about FOIA and sourcing.</p>

		<p>FOIA requests that can help tell award-winning stories: https://www.muckrock.com/news/archives/2017/aug/25/foia-requests-can-help-tell-award-winning-stories/</p> <p>Investigative Reporter's Handbook, chapters 6 and 7. Bring at least one written insight or question to class.</p>	
<p>Week 6 Feb. 11</p>	<p>Advanced FOIA. How to get documents most other reporters wouldn't, including playing agencies and jurisdictions off against each other and submitting separate requests at separate times to separate parts of an agency.</p> <p>Discuss story memos, fact-checking.</p> <p>Discuss Handbook chapters.</p>	<p>Assignment: File a FOIA (and turn it in) by 5:00 p.m. on Thursday, February 14. Ungraded but will be factored into your class participation.</p> <p>Report like a pit bull on your final project!</p> <p>Write an update on your final story. Include a synopsis of new information you have uncovered; a list of sources, human and documentary, that you have accessed; and a list of sources you have *not* accessed and how you plan to do so. Due Monday, February 25, 9:00 a.m. Share with the class for discussion. Ungraded but will be factored into your class participation.</p> <p>Reading: Circle sources as usual, but pay special attention to the opening and structure. <u>Outline each story and bring written copies of your outline to class.</u></p> <p>Battered, Bereaved and Behind Bars: https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/alexcampbell/how-the-law-turns-battered-women-into-criminals (Bonus read: Free At Last. https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/alexcampbell/jailed-when-her-boyfriend-killed-her-son-she-is-at-last-free)</p> <p>Busted: https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/alexcampbell/jailed-when-her-boyfriend-killed-her-son-she-is-at-last-free</p>	<p>Thursday, February 14, 5:00 p.m.: FOIA due.</p> <p>Monday, February 25, 9:00 a.m.: Story update due.</p> <p>Report intensively on your final project!</p> <p>Come to class February 25 with printouts of the readings and your classmates' story updates. Be prepared to discuss the readings and your colleagues story updates.</p>

		cle/kendalltaggart/secret-nypd-files-hundreds-of-officers-committed-serious American Mercenaries: https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/aramroston/mercenaries-assassination-us-yemen-uae-spear-golan-dahlan . Investigative Reporter's Handbook, chapters 12, 13, and, especially, 22. Bring at least one written insight or question to class.	
Week 7 Feb. 18	NO CLASS — PRESIDENTS' DAY.		
Week 8 Feb. 25	How to write. Expository vs narrative — when to use each. Lede. Nut graf — why should your reader spend her precious time on this story instead of the infinite number of others she can access on her phone? Chronology is your friend. Discuss readings. Discuss Handbook chapters. Discuss story updates.	Assignments: File a FOIA (and turn it in) by 5:00 p.m. on Thursday, February 28. Ungraded but will be factored into your class participation. Story memo, with top and nut graf <u>as if the story were to be published</u> . Include fact-checking references. Top and nut graf combined cannot be more than 750 words. Due Thursday, February 28 at 9:00 a.m. Share your version with the class to discuss. Graded. Write a different top for one of the three stories we read for this class. Maximum 600 words. Monday, March 4, at 9:00 a.m. Share your version with the class to discuss. Graded. File a FOIA (and turn it in) by 5:00 p.m. on Thursday. Readings: Note: Circle all sources, human, data, and documentary. Clean Water Laws Are Neglected, at a Cost in Suffering.	Thursday, February 28, 9:00 a.m.: Story memo due. Thursday, February 28, 5:00 p.m.: FOIA due. Monday, March 4, 9:00 a.m.: Alternate top due. Come to class March 4 with printouts of the readings. Be prepared to discuss the readings and your colleagues' story memos and alternative tops.

		<p>https://www.nytimes.com/2009/09/13/us/13water.html</p> <p>Machine Bias: https://www.propublica.org/article/machine-bias-risk-assessments-in-criminal-sentencing</p> <p>App: Vital Signs. https://projects.propublica.org/vital-signs/</p> <p>Big data offers new way to find hidden drug interactions: https://www.chicagotribune.com/news/watchdog/druginteractions/ct-drug-interactions-signal-detection-met-20160209-story.html</p> <p>For cops, no limit. https://www.pulitzer.org/winners/sun-sentinel</p> <p>How to “interview” a big pile of data. https://training.npr.org/visual/what-to-do-with-a-big-pile-of-data/</p> <p>Investigative Reporter’s Handbook, chapter 11. Bring one written insight or question to class.</p>	
Week 9 March 4	Data. Possible guest lecturer, TBD. In-class assignment TBD. Discuss story memos and alternative tops. Discuss intersection of government and private sector.	Assignments: File a FOIA (and turn it in) by 5:00 p.m. on Thursday, March 7. Ungraded but will be factored into your class participation. Write an update on your final story. Include a synopsis of new information you have uncovered; a list of sources, human and documentary, that you have accessed; and a list of sources you have *not* accessed and how you plan to do so. Consider trying out a lede and a nut graf (or, or audio/video, an opening sequence and a nut section) that you could use in your rough draft. Update due Monday, March 18, 9:00 a.m. Share with the class for discussion.	Thursday, March 7, 5:00 p.m.: FOIA due. Monday, March 18, 9:00 a.m.: Story update due. Come to class March 18 with printouts of the readings and your colleagues’ story updates. Be prepared to discuss these.

		<p>Ungraded but will be factored into your class participation.</p> <p>Over the next two weeks, be thinking about your rough draft, and consider getting ahead on the readings for future classes.</p> <p>Readings: Note: Circle all sources, human, data, and documentary.</p> <p>I read 1,182 emergency room bills this year. Here's what I learned. https://www.vox.com/health-care/2018/12/18/18134825/emergency-room-bills-health-care-costs-america</p> <p>Danger: Learn at Your Own Risk. http://media.philly.com/storage/special_projects/lead-paint-poison-children-asbestos-mold-schools-philadelphia-toxic-city.html</p> <p>David Fahrenthold tells the behind-the-scenes story of his year covering Trump. https://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/magazine/david-fahrenthold-tells-the-behind-the-scenes-story-of-his-year-covering-trump/2016/12/27/299047c4-b510-11e6-b8df-600bd9d38a02_story.html?utm_term=.236ab0548f4c</p> <p>Lost Mothers: https://www.propublica.org/article/lost-mothers-maternal-health-died-childbirth-pregnancy</p> <p>Watch "Walking While Black." https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=71&v=IJFqvRwOiis</p> <p>Investigative Reporter's Handbook, chapters 9 and 10. Bring one written insight or question to class.</p>	
Spring Recess: March 10 – 17			

<p>Week 10</p> <p>March 18</p>	<p>Innovative ways of documenting.</p> <p>Possible guest lecturer, TBD.</p> <p>Discuss story updates.</p>	<p>Assignments:</p> <p>File a FOIA (and turn it in) by 5:00 p.m. on Thursday, March 21. Ungraded but will be factored into your class participation.</p> <p>Write or produce a rough draft of your story. Ungraded, but it should be written/produced as if it were to be published/aired. Audio video projects must include a written script. Whether your project is text, audio, or video, include complete list of all your sources, human, documentary, and data; include contact info for all human sources and for people who provided the documentary or data sources. Also include a discussion of reporting holes and how you intend to fill them. Due Friday, March 22, at 5:00 p.m. Share with the class.</p> <p>Read/listen to/view your classmates' rough drafts and write up specific, concrete suggestions or questions. Bring these to class.</p> <p>Reading: Note, circle all sources.</p> <p>The Price of Nice Nails: https://www.nytimes.com/2015/05/10/nyregion/at-nail-salons-in-nyc-manicurists-are-underpaid-and-unprotected.html</p> <p>Perfect Nails, Poisoned Workers. https://www.nytimes.com/2015/05/11/nyregion/nail-salon-workers-in-nyc-face-hazardous-chemicals.html?mtrref=www.nytimes.com&gwh=495DD837DAECE6FB258FFBC5ED9E651D&gwt=pay</p> <p>What the 'Times' Got Wrong About Nail Salons. https://www.nybooks.com/daily/2015/07/25/nail-salons-new-york-times-got-wrong/</p> <p>Rebuttal to The NYRB's Article on NYT Nail Salon Series.</p>	<p>Thursday, March 21, 5:00 p.m.: FOIA due.</p> <p>Friday, March 22, 5:00 p.m.: Rough draft due.</p> <p>Come to class on March 25 with printouts of the readings and your classmates' rough drafts. Be ready to discuss the readings and rough drafts.</p>
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		Investigative Reporter's Handbook, chapters 16. Bring one written insight or question to class.	
Week 11 March 25	<p>Cautionary tales. Guided discussion of the readings, focusing on the challenges and pitfalls of investigative journalism, and how to deal with them.</p> <p>Discuss rough drafts.</p>	<p>Assignment: File a FOIA (and turn it in) by 5:00 p.m. on Thursday, March 28. Ungraded but will be factored into your class participation.</p> <p>Write a brief update on your story, with special attention to how you are acting on the advice of your classmates on how to improve your story. Due Monday, April 1, at 9:00 a.m. Share with the class. Ungraded but will be factored into your class participation.</p> <p>Be working on your near-final draft!</p> <p>Readings: AP Stylebook, "The Associated Press statement of news values and principles."</p> <p>The BuzzFeed News Standards And Ethics Guide: https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/shani/the-buzzfeed-editorial-standards-and-ethics-guide</p> <p>For these stories, circle all sources:</p> <p>The Mirage Tavern: Watch: https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=35&v=pPt2y4VCxtQ</p> <p>On this site, http://dlib.nyu.edu/undercover/mirage-pamela-zekman-zay-n-smith-chicago-sun-times, read the following articles: "I-Our Bar Uncovers Payoffs, Tax Gyps," "II-Cheating the Taxpayer - 'Mr. Fixit' Tells How," "XV - Ex-Cop in Huge Vending Skim"</p> <p>Chicago Sun-Times Pulitzers: was the Mirage a deception? (Note: no need to circle sources.) http://sites.dlib.nyu.edu/undercover/sites/dlib.nyu.edu.undercover/files/d</p>	<p>Thursday, March 22, 5:00 p.m.: FOIA due.</p> <p>Monday, April 1, 9:00 a.m.: Story update due.</p> <p>Work on your near-final draft.</p> <p>Come to class on April 1 with printouts of the readings and your colleagues' story updates. Be ready to discuss these.</p>

		<p>ocuments/uploads/editors/CJR_1979_JulAug_pg16.pdf</p> <p>40 years later, reporters remember how they bought a bar to expose corruption. (Note: no need to circle sources.) https://chicago.suntimes.com/news/40-years-later-reporters-remember-how-they-bought-a-bar-to-expose-corruption/</p> <p>On this page, https://www.pulitzer.org/winners/to-ny-horwitz, read “9 To Nowhere -- These Six Growth Jobs Are Dull, Dead-End, Sometimes Dangerous: They Show How '90s Trends Can Make Work Grimmer For Unskilled Workers” (Please do circle sources.)</p> <p>Investigative Reporter’s Handbook, chapters 17, 20, and 23. Bring one written insight or question to class.</p>	
<p>Week 12 April 1</p>	<p>“No surprises journalism” and the ethics of investigative reporting. “Confession time.”</p> <p>Guided discussion of undercover reporting.</p> <p>Discussion of story updates.</p>	<p>Assignments:</p> <p>File a FOIA (and turn it in) by 5:00 p.m. on Thursday, April 4. Ungraded but will be factored into your class participation.</p> <p>Prepare a near-complete draft of final project. Must include fact-checking notes, source list, and a brief explanation of what last reporting holes remain and how you will fill them. If your project is video or audio, you must also submit a written script. Due Thursday, April 4 at 9:00 a.m. Share with class. Ungraded but will be factored into your class participation.</p> <p>Reading: The First Amendment to the US Constitution: https://www.law.cornell.edu/constitution/first_amendment</p> <p>Read: AP Stylebook, “Briefing on Media Law”</p>	<p>Thursday, April 4, 9:00 a.m.: Near-complete draft of final project due.</p> <p>Thursday, April 4, 5:00 p.m.: FOIA due.</p> <p>Come to class on April 8 with printouts of the readings and your classmates’ near-final projects. Be prepared to discuss these.</p>

		<p>Supreme Court opinions and dissents in Bartnicki v Vopper: https://scholar.google.com/scholar_case?case=2171346211086974391&q=bartnicki+v.+vopper&hl=en&as_sdt=2006&as_vis=1</p> <p>US Law “Gathering, transmitting or losing defense information”: https://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/text/18/793</p> <p>Affidavit in support of a search warrant: https://fas.org/sgp/jud/kim/warrant.pdf</p> <p>James Rosen: Fox News reporter targeted as 'co- conspirator' in spying case: https://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/may/20/fox-news-reporter-targeted-us-government</p> <p>Freedom of the Press and Criminal Solicitation: https://www.huffingtonpost.com/geoffrey-r-stone/freedom-of-the-press-and_b_3314833.html</p> <p>Read the lawyer’s letter posted at the bottom of this story: https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/davidnoriega/exclusive-nypd-is-investigating-hollywood-director-bryan-sin</p> <p>For the following readings, play special attention to the various strategies deployed to undermine the story:</p> <p>Bad Blood, by John Carreyrou, chapters 19-23 and pages 286-288.</p> <p>Nothing To See Here: https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/rosalindadams/how-a-giant-psychiatric-hospital-company-tried-to-spin-us</p>	
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Bonus TBD	- Selden Ring Award presentation and luncheon		
Week 13 April 8	<p>Legal and PR pushback. Guided discussion of the readings, what to expect when you report on powerful people and institutions, and the surprisingly perilous legal framework for newsgathering.</p> <p>Discussion of near-final drafts.</p>	<p>Assignments: File a FOIA (and turn it in) by 5:00 p.m. on Thursday, March 24. Ungraded but will be factored into your class participation.</p> <p>Work on your final drafts.</p> <p>Reading: Note: No need to circle sources.</p> <p>Top Secret NSA Report Details Russian Hacking Effort Days Before 2016 Election: https://theintercept.com/2017/06/05/top-secret-nsa-report-details-russian-hacking-effort-days-before-2016-election/</p> <p>Arrest Warrant for Reality Winner: https://www.justice.gov/opa/press-release/file/971331/download</p> <p>How the Intercept Outed Reality Winner: https://blog.erratasec.com/2017/06/how-intercept-outed-reality-winner.html</p> <p>Reality Winner, Former N.S.A. Translator, Gets More Than 5 Years in Leak of Russian Hacking Report: https://www.nytimes.com/2018/08/23/us/reality-winner-nsa-sentence.html</p> <p>Surveillance Self-Defense: https://ssd.eff.org/en/playlist/want-security-starter-pack#playlist</p>	<p>Thursday, March 24, 5:00 p.m.: FOIA due.</p> <p>Work on your final drafts.</p> <p>Come to class April 15 with any questions or problems you're facing with your final drafts. Bring printouts of the readings and be prepared to discuss them.</p>

		<p>Watch CitizenFour.</p> <p>Investigative Reporter's Handbook, chapters 18 and 21. Bring one written insight or question to class.</p>	
<p>Week 14 April 15</p>	<p>Protecting your sources — and yourself.</p> <p>In-class security exercises.</p> <p>Discuss any problems or challenges on final projects.</p>	<p>Assignment: FOIA is optional this week.</p> <p>Finish final project! Due Thursday, April 18, at 9:00 a.m. If written, file two copies: 1) a clean copy with photos, other art, and hyperlinks you want all readers to see. 2) a fact-checking copy with all facts sourced. 3) A complete list of all your sources, human, documentary, and data; include contact info for all human sources and for people who provided the documentary or data sources. If your final project is video or audio, submit the video or audio and also a fact-checking copy of the script. If any "found" video or audio is used as evidence to support the claims in the story, give fact-checking notes on how it was authenticated. Also submit complete list of all your sources, human, documentary, and data; include contact info for all human sources and for people who provided the documentary or data sources. Share clean copy of your project with the class. Graded.</p> <p>Read your colleagues' final projects; write down specific suggestions for their rewrite.</p> <p>Reading: Real job letter, to be circulated.</p>	<p>Thursday, April 18, 9:00 a.m.: Final project due.</p> <p>Come to class on April 22 with printouts of the readings, your colleagues' final projects, and your specific suggestions. Be prepared to discuss these.</p>

Week 15 April 22	<p>In-class presentation of completed final projects. Include one or two lessons you learned from reporting this story.</p> <p>Submit USC course evaluations</p> <p>Guided discussion: How to get an investigative journalism job — or a stepping stone to such a job.</p> <p>Recap of the class, of investigative reporting and a discussion of practical steps that students should take in looking for investigative reporting jobs (print, broadcast, online) today.</p>	<p>Assignments: No FOIA, but please keep submitting at least one a week for the rest of your career.</p> <p>Rewrite final project using feedback from instructor and classmates. . If written, file two copies: 1) a clean copy with photos, other art, and hyperlinks you want all readers to see. 2) a fact-checking copy with all facts sourced. 3) A complete list of all your sources, human, documentary, and data; include contact info for all human sources and for people who provided the documentary or data sources. If your final project is video or audio, submit the video or audio and also a fact-checking copy of the script. If any “found” video or audio is used as evidence to support the claims in the story, give fact-checking notes on how it was authenticated. Also submit complete list of all your sources, human, documentary, and data; include contact info for all human sources and for people who provided the documentary or data sources. Due Friday, May 3, 5:00 pm. Graded.</p>	May 3, 5:00 p.m.: Rewrites due.
Finals Week May 6 4:30- 6:30 p.m.	Special surprise event.		
	<p>Guest speakers (schedule TBA):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jason Leopold, BuzzFeed News • Rob Kuznia, winner 2014 Pulitzer Prize winner • Others TBD 		

IX. Policies and Procedures

Attendance

Attendance is expected for every class. Notify me in advance by email if you are going to be absent because of illness, a family emergency or any other reason. Unexcused absences will be reflected in your participation grade.

Tardiness is unacceptable. If you expect to be more than 15 minutes late to class, please stay home.

Class protocol

This is a professional degree program. As such, students are expected to deal with each other and with me in a collegial manner. That means you should immediately talk to your instructor if you have any concerns about the course, grading, fellow students, the length of time it takes to get back graded assignments, etc.

Laptops, tablets and cellphones

As stated above, this class has a no-screens policy. Students will need to use laptop computers or tablet devices in the classroom for some exercises, so they should be brought to class. Out of consideration for the learning environment and fellow classmates, you should refrain from extraneous activities such as instant messaging, gaming, or other online activities.

IX. Policies and Procedures

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

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

X. About Your Instructor

Mark Schoofs is a Pulitzer Prize winning journalist whose career started in what was then called the lesbian and gay press and moved from there to The Village Voice, The Wall Street Journal, ProPublica, and BuzzFeed News.

As a foreign correspondent and investigative reporter at The Wall Street Journal, he showed how war and neglect decimated basic healthcare and disease prevention in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and infiltrated two of the largest gangs in South Africa to expose the inner workings of the global trade in methamphetamine ingredients. In 2010, he played a key role in the Journal's "Secrets of the System" series, which mined Medicare claims databases to uncover abuse and fraud; the series was a Pulitzer finalist.

Schoofs was awarded the 2000 Pulitzer Prize for International Reporting for an eight-part series that detailed the devastating impact of the AIDS crisis in Africa. He authored that series while a staff writer at the Village Voice. Schoofs was also part of the Wall Street Journal team that won the 2002 Pulitzer Prize for breaking news coverage of the September 11 attack on the World Trade Center.

At BuzzFeed News, he launched and led the investigative reporting team, growing it from zero to more than 20 reporters and guiding it to numerous awards, including Pulitzer finalist honors twice, a National Magazine Award, and a Polk Award.