I. **Course Description**

A journalist’s reach into communities for stories and sources has never been easier than it is today, thanks in large part to social media. With unprecedented speed, journalists can gauge the pulse of a community through social platforms like Twitter, Instagram, Facebook and SnapChat. These platforms also allow journalists to include in their news stories social media content produced by private citizens themselves. Sometimes social media posts even become the news.

Good reporting, however, also begins with good foundational knowledge about a community. Yes, you can “parachute” into a location and produce decent work if you are empathetic and smart. But deeper, ground-breaking work takes real understanding of a community’s history and contemporary issues. Besides race, gender and ethnicity, it is important to note that “diversity” includes socioeconomics, sexual orientation, citizenship status, religion, disability and generational issues. Many of these communities are intersectional, and are not limited to geography, and thrive online.

As the course name suggests, we will learn about and from diverse communities that are poorly covered, (if covered at all). Additionally, this course will teach you how to use various social media outlets to find new voices. We will continue to hone our traditional reporting skills, but we also will learn how to engage with a community using social media. For example, we will discuss how to identify strong, citizen-produced content. Lastly, we will learn how to use social media to crowdsource information, public reactions and potential sources from citizens across our city.

II

a. **Learning Objectives**

By the end of this course, you will:

- Demonstrate how to effectively engage diverse audiences with traditional and digital reporting and research skills and tools.
- Demonstrate digital and social media research skills to identify and cultivate sources and content across socio-economic, race and ethnicity and other differences.
Use various platforms such as YouTube, Twitter, Instagram, Facebook and Snapchat to engage in social listening for new voices and story leads.

- Verify social media content
- Collaborate with each other to learn about diverse local communities
- Demonstrate knowledge of diverse communities and their issues across the U.S. and in the greater Los Angeles area

II
b. Learning Assessments
Learning objectives will be measured by:
- Quizzes based on readings and other materials posted on Blackboard
- Community event (a pop-up newsroom, talking to people on public transportation, or talking to people at a community event organized by a local news outlet), in a local neighborhood conducted in teams.
- A group paper and presentation that includes a media coverage plan about this neighborhood, its news gaps, and what its community members believe are its most important issues. Crowdsourcing and community engagement, and a plan for how to tackle these issues, will be included in this plan.
- A news story about a local community in the platform of your choice (text, audio, video), ideally for publication in one of the MC platforms or the Daily Trojan (*stories about food, festivals or new businesses are prohibited unless there is a super-compelling and unique news hook*). This will include fact-checking every element of your story.
- A final research paper about a Los Angeles community, the history of its media coverage, an analysis of its current coverage, an interview(s) with journalists who cover that community, and a plan for how to improve coverage of this community.

III. Course Notes
Students will receive numeric grades that will be translated into letter grades. All lectures slides will be posted on Blackboard.

IV. Description and Assessment of Assignments

Due Dates
Quizzes Weekly
Community event, Group Presentation/Paper Sept. 17
Story Pitch Oct. 1
News Story Oct. 15
Final research paper proposal Oct. 29
Final research paper (first draft) Nov. 19
Final research paper (second draft) Dec. 3
Final research paper (final) Dec. 12

V. Grading
a. Breakdown of Grade
Assignments: % of Grade
Weekly Quizzes 15%
Community Event 15%
Group Presentation/Paper 15%
Story Pitch 5%
News story 20%
Final Research Paper 30%
Total 100%

b. Grading Scale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage Range</th>
<th>Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>95% to 100%</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90% to 94%</td>
<td>A-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>87% to 89%</td>
<td>B+</td>
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<tr>
<td>84% to 86%</td>
<td>B</td>
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<tr>
<td>80% to 83%</td>
<td>B-</td>
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<tr>
<td>77% to 79%</td>
<td>C+</td>
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<tr>
<td>74% to 76%</td>
<td>C</td>
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<tr>
<td>70% to 73%</td>
<td>C-</td>
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<tr>
<td>67% to 69%</td>
<td>D+</td>
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<tr>
<td>64% to 66%</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60% to 63%</td>
<td>D-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0% to 59%</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

c. Grading Standards

*Journalism*

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.

**Grades will be assigned as follows:**
A’s are reserved for work that is outstanding (thoughtful and illuminating) and for class participation that reflects full mastery of course concepts and methods. Projects/papers are well-written/produced, well-argued, well-researched and have no or very few grammatical or technical errors.

B+ and B are given for work and class participation that is above average, demonstrating effort and basic mastery of course materials. Projects/papers may have some grammatical errors and technical or other issues but are well organized and well-written.

B- and C+ will be given for work and class participation that shows minimal effort and/or a passable level of understanding but needs substantial improvement in ideas and argument. Projects/papers have significant grammatical and technical errors and are not well organized.

C and C- is for minimally acceptable work that fulfills the bare minimum of specified requirements, demonstrating both little effort and little understanding of the material. Projects/papers have many grammatical and technical errors and lack organization.
D work is below the minimum standard for acceptable writing. Projects have significant problems with writing, critical thinking, production and organization.

F = Unacceptable work that fails to meet any criteria of the assignment.

- Fabricating a story or paper or making up quotes or information.
- Plagiarizing a script/article/paper, part of a script/article/paper 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.

VI. Assignment Submission, Makeups and Late Policy
Assignments are due on the specified date. They should be uploaded to Blackboard in a Word doc at the appointed time. Assignments should have the student’s name at the top and should be paginated. All assignments should be 12 pt. type and 1.5-line spacing.

Late assignments will be marked down one letter grade per day unless you have prior permission from your instructor to turn in your assignment after the deadline. The longer the lead time before the due date, the more likely you are to receive an extension. Short of emergency circumstances, do not expect an extension to be given the day before the paper is due. Remember a C, D or even an F is better than a zero.

Make-ups for the mid-term or a late final are possible given prior arrangement with the instructor and under very limited circumstances.

VII. Required Readings and Supplementary Materials
Text:

As a journalist, you must be familiar with the news of the day. Please read, view or listen to the daily reports of the news organizations listed below not only for the news, but also how each platform reports, writes and delivers the news. There are subtle and significant differences in how news is delivered on the air, on digital platforms and in print.

Other required readings (and video and audio) are included in the syllabus and will be made available via Blackboard. All materials are fair game for the weekly in-class quizzes and discussions.
Go Digital
BuzzFeed News: buzzfeed.com/news
Los Angeles Times: latimes.com
NBC News: nbcnews.com
The New York Times: nytimes.com
VICE News:
The Washington Post: washingtonpost.com

Follow on Twitter
@AP @BuzzFeedNews
@VICE @WashingtonPost

Watch one National and one Local TV Broadcast Daily
ABC World News CBS Evening News
KABC KCBS/KCAL
KNBC KTLA
KTTV NBC Nightly News

Listen to NPR
KPCC/Southern California Public Radio

Watch on SnapChat Discover
CNN NBC News
New York Times NowThis

Watch these News Organizations on Instagram Stories
CNN The Guardian
New York Times

Newsletters
API’s Need to Know: http://bit.ly/readAPItoo

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.journaliststoolbox.org/archive/mobile-journalism/
NPPA: https://nppa.org
SPJ: http://www.spij.org
NPR training: http://training.npr.org/category/social-media/
NPR Social Media Code of Ethics: http://ethics.npr.org/tag/social-media/

News focused on specific communities
The Root: www.theroot.com
LATaco: https://www.lataco.com/
Bitch: https://www.bitchmedia.org/
The Los Angeles Sentinel: https://lasentinel.net/
Disability Scoop: https://www.disabilityscoop.com/latest-news/
NBC Asia: https://www.nbcnews.com/asian-america
NBC Latino: https://www.nbcnews.com/latino

VIII. 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.

IX. Add/Drop Dates for Session 001 (15 weeks: 8/26/19 – 12/6/19)
Friday, September 13: Last day to register and add classes for Session 001
Friday, September 13: Last day to drop a class without a mark of “W,” except for Monday-only classes, and receive a refund for Session 001
Tuesday, September 17: Last day to drop a Monday-only class without a mark of “W” and receive a refund for Session 001
Friday, October 11: Last day to drop a course without a mark of “W” on the transcript for Session 001. [Please drop any course by the end of week three (or the 20 percent mark of the session) to avoid tuition charges.]
Friday, October 11: Last day to change pass/no pass to letter grade for Session 001. [All major and minor courses must be taken for a letter grade.]
Friday, November 15: Last day to drop a class with a mark of “W” for Session 001

Class participation
Students must attend all class sessions (short of dire circumstances), read/view/listen to all assignments, and participate in all discussions. We expect you to work hard. There are no shortcuts. Assignments will be graded on content and form. Even if you have excellent ideas, if you cannot clearly express them in writing or other formats, then you will not receive a high grade in this course.

Students are expected to be in class unless they are deathly ill or encounter an unexpected emergency (e.g. flooding, fire, accident or family emergency). If you cannot come to class, please email the instructors ahead of time. Participating in class is beneficial for you and your classmates. You will be better prepared for your projects. Moreover, it shows the instructors that you have done the readings and thought about the issues. You are encouraged to express your views and to disagree respectfully with others.

Students are expected to be on time, especially since quizzes will be given at 9 a.m. sharp.
XI. CLASS SCHEDULE, READINGS and DEADLINES

Readings are due on the day they are listed on the syllabus. The syllabus is subject to change based on news events and guest speaker availability.

Week 1: Aug. 27 – Improving news coverage while minimizing harm

Introduction to engaging a diverse and increasingly wired public, while respecting privacy and minimizing harm. A review of the demographics of Los Angeles. In addition, how do we define “excellent” journalism?

In-Class: Break into groups of three or four for pop-up newsroom assignment, presentation/paper/media coverage plan. You are not required to focus on this community for the entire semester. However, it would make it easier to become an “expert” on its issues and develop sources, so some of you may want to consider making one community your focus for the rest of the assignments.

Readings:

From Text:

Chapter 1, Len-Rios and Perry.

On Blackboard:


“Diversity in Newsrooms Leads to Better Journalism,” a TED Talk by Dhanya Rajendran: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gjipMicIAs8&feature=youtu.be

Homework: As a group, decide where and when you want to do your pop-up newsroom, ride public transit or attend a community event sponsored by a news outlet. You should do it a) when you can all be there, b) at a time and place where you will get a lot of foot traffic and, c) figure out how you will deal with any language barriers, if any. Report back to the class next week.

Week 2: Sept. 3 -- Defining Diversity in Los Angeles

A Historical Overview of LA’s Evolving Communities. Who is American? How do we talk across “difference?”

Guest Speaker: LAT Reporter Esmeralda Bermudez.

In-class: Discuss which communities your group will hold focus on for its presentation and why. Review what the presentation and paper should include. Rubrics will be provided on Bb.
### Readings:

#### Text:
Len-Rios and Perry, Chapters 2 and 3.

#### On BB:

“In the Piñata District, a street food market is a theater that overwhelms the senses,” by Esmeralda Bermudez.


‘Vivaporu’: For many Latinos, memories of Vicks VapoRub are as strong as the scent of eucalyptus,” by Esmeralda Bermudez.


“'I am raising my daughter to speak three languages. A stranger demanded I 'speak English' to her,” by Esmeralda Bermudez.


#### Homework:
Work on scheduling your community event and the group presentation/paper/media coverage plan, which is due Week 4 (Sept. 17).

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### Week 3: Sept. 10 -- Covering Diversity Across Los Angeles

Community Reporting, Databases and Geolocation: We use the U.S. Census Bureau’s American FactFinder database to survey Los Angeles County’s 84 incorporated cities. We will discuss different approaches to engagement and learn about the pros and cons of using social geolocation tools as reporting aids.

#### Readings:

**On Bb:**


[American FactFinder](https://www.census.gov) offers statistics about population, housing, industry, and business.

[TweetMap](https://www.TweetMap) is a tool that allows journalists to explore trending topics by geolocation.

“The 2020 Census is in Trouble,” Vox. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xZTD-00H1jE&feature=youtu.be](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xZTD-00H1jE&feature=youtu.be)

#### Homework:
Complete the community assignment and the group presentation/paper/media coverage plan, which is due next week (Sept. 17).
**Week 4: Sept. 17 -- Pop-Up Newsroom Presentations**

Each group will present its findings from the community event. Be sure to highlight the community reporting needs and share a media coverage plan.

**Homework:** Start working on your story pitch, which is due Week 6 (Oct. 1), and even sooner if possible. You may choose to write a 600-word story or complete 60-second audio or video pieces. Each must have a social media component (ex: Tweets with photos or Instagram photos with links to the story). There must be three sources. The story is due Week 8 (Oct. 15).

**Week 5: Sept. 24 – Mining User-Generated Media, Part 1**

We will discuss the best practices for using social media content produced by community residents and community institutions.

**Readings:**

**From Text:**
Len-Rios and Perry, Chapter 4.

**On Bb:**
Diana Imamgaiazova,

[GuardianWitness](https://www.theguardian.com) is *The Guardian’s* official webpage for citizen journalists to submit work.

**Homework:** Story pitches due next week.

**Week 6: Oct. 1 – Mining User-Generated Social Media, Part 2.**

We continue our discussion of the pros and cons of incorporating user-generated content in the age of bots and trolls. We also continue learning about some of the “differences” that cut across many communities, in this case, LGBT status.

Let’s talk about *fact-checking*. In addition to checking for basic facts, such as name spellings, addresses and dates, we also need to be mindful of bias.

**In-Class:** Workshop story pitches. Stories due Week 8 (Oct. 15).

**Readings:**

**From Text:**
Len-Rios and Perry, Chapter 6

**On Bb:**
We discuss the words that journalists should consider when covering diverse communities. We also continue learning about some of the “differences” that cut across many communities, in this case, immigrants.

Readings:
From Text:
Len-Rios and Perry, Chapters 8 and 9.

On Bb:
“Why News sites are Closing their Comments Sections,” Medium,

“The Failing Diversity Efforts of Journalism.”
https://www.cjr.org/analysis/newsroom-diversity-failing-efforts.php

Homework: Stories due next week.

Week 8: Oct. 15 – Elder Issues/Moderating Public Forums

We examine the pros and cons of hosting a comments section on an official news outlet website. We discuss the threats journalists face online too. We continue learning about some of the “differences” that cut across many communities, in this case, generational diversity.

Guest speaker via Skype: Paul Kleyman, the national coordinator of the Journalists Network on Generations.

Readings:
From Text:
Len-Rios and Perry, Chapter 13.

On Bb:

The New Reality of Old Age in America, by Mary Jordan and Kevin Sullivan.

**Homework:** Proposal for final paper due Week 10 (Oct. 29).

**Fall Break (Oct. 17-18)**

**Week 9: Oct. 22 — Covering the “Differently Abled”**
We continue learning about some of the “differences” that cut across many communities, in this case, the world of disability.

**Guest speaker via Skype:** Amy Silverman, Board member, National Center on Disability and Journalism, ASU’s Cronkite School of Journalism.

**Homework:** Final paper proposals due next week.

**From Text:**
Len-Rios and Perry, Chapter 11.

**On BB:**
Disability Style Guide:
https://ncdj.org/style-guide/

“Navigating Education Options when your Kid has a Disability.”
https://ncdj.org/2019/08/navigating-education-options-when-your-kid-has-a-disability/

**Week 10: Oct. 29— Health Inequalities**
We continue learning about some of the “differences” that cut across many communities, in this case, health inequalities.

**Guest Speaker via Skype (Unconfirmed):** Linda Villarosa, author of the article on Bb on black maternal mortality.

**In-Class:** Review final paper proposals.

**Readings:**
**Text:**
Len-Rios and Perry, Chapter 12.

**On BB:**
“Why America’s Black Mothers and Babies are in a Life-or-Death Crisis,” by Linda Villarosa.
“Myths about Physical, Racial Differences were used to Justify Slavery – and are Still Believed by Doctors Today,” by Linda Villarosa.

In-Class: Review Final paper proposals. First draft due Week 13 (Nov. 19).

Week 11: Nov. 5 – Diverse Issues in User Privacy
We discuss how the notions of online privacy are different for various communities. We also discuss how new technologies may introduce bias into the newsroom. We continue learning about some of the “differences” that cut across many communities, in this case, crime coverage.

Guest speaker via Skype (unconfirmed): Julia Angwin, co-author of the article on Bb about biased software.

Readings:
From Text:
Len-Rios and Perry, Chapter 10.

On Bb:
“Machine Bias: There’s Software Used Across the Country to Predict Future Criminals. And its Biased Against Blacks,” by Julia Angwin, Jeff Larson, Surya Mattu and Lauren Kirchner.

Week 12: Nov. 12 – Covering Religion
We continue learning about some of the “differences” that cut across many communities, in this case, religion.

In-Class: Review stories, which are due today.

Readings:
From Text:
Len-Rios and Perry, Chapter 7.

On BB:
“The Do’s and Don’ts of Religion Reporting.”
https://thegroundtruthproject.org/dos-donts-religion-reporting/

Homework: First draft of final paper due next week.

Week 13: Nov. 19 – Engaging Community During Crisis: Mobile Witnessing
We examine how newsrooms have responded to graphic, user-generated content that has captured police brutality, mass shootings, terrorist attacks and more. We continue learning about some of the “differences” that cut across many communities, in this case, gender.

In-Class: First draft of final paper proposals reviewed in class. Second draft due week 15 (Dec. 3).
Readings:
From text:
Len-Rios and Perry, Chapters 5 and 14.

On BB:
“Handling Traumatic Imagery: Developing a Standard Operating Procedure.”
https://dartcenter.org/resources/handling-traumatic-imagery-developing-standard-operating-procedure

WEEK 14 -- Nov. 26 – One-on-One meetings with instructor

Students will meet one-on-one with the instructor to review progress on the final paper.

Thanksgiving Break -- Nov. 27-Dec. 1

Week 15: Dec. 3 – In-class presentations, Final paper review

Brief in-class presentations of your final papers and feedback from instructor on second draft.

Course Wrap-up

Course and instructor evaluations

Readings:
From Text:
Len-Rios and Perry, Chapter 15.

Last day of Classes: Dec. 6
Study Days: Dec. 7-10
Exams: Dec. 11-18

Class Final: Thursday, Dec. 12, 11-1 p.m.

XII. Policies and Procedures
Communication
Students are encouraged to contact the instructor outside of class via call, text or email if you cannot come to office hours to arrange a meeting time. I will respond to all communication within 24-48 hours.

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

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**

**XIII. Instructor Bio:**
Dr. 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. Her
doctorate is from USC’s Rossier School of Education. She served as Assistant and Associate Director of the J-School for five years before returning to faculty.