

JOUR 539: Introduction to Investigative Reporting **2 Units**

Fall 2019 – Mondays – 5-6:50 p.m.

Section: 21562D

Location: ASC 331

Instructor: Mark Schoofs

Office: ANN 204A

Office Hours: By appointment

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I. Course Description

This course teaches the bedrock skill of reporting: *how to find stuff out*. No matter what kind of journalism you plan to pursue — entertainment, criminal justice, sports, business, or anything else — this course will help you outpace your competition by giving you the tools to uncover deeper, more explosive stories. And it will introduce you to the rigor, strategy, challenge, and thrill of investigative journalism.

This course isn't about attending press conferences or other dog-and-pony shows where people spoon-feed journalists what they want them to know. This is a course about finding out what people *don't* want you to know. To learn how to do that, you'll read exemplary investigative journalism and tip sheets, and we'll engage in spirited class discussions and exercises. But above all this course is hands on. You'll go to the courthouse to pull search warrants and civil complaints. You'll file a FOIA every week — and learn how to do it smarter and better than your competition. You'll learn to think — always — about what documents are available and how to obtain them, because documents are investigative gold. You'll cajole reluctant or skittish sources, and learn how to extract information from hostile sources. You'll interview not just people but also data, unlocking the immense power of data-driven reporting by mastering its fundamental skills. You'll learn the best way to bulletproof your stories so effectively that libel lawyers will slump in despair.

And you will learn the one indispensable quality you need to land really big stories, the kind that frees people from prison or changes laws or topples the powerful: persistence. Reporting begins when a source says no, hangs up, or slams the door in your face. Your job is to get around such obstacles with resourcefulness and grit. So bring that never-give-up attitude to every assignment.

Finally, this course will set you up for success in your capstone or other major project. The main, semester-long assignment is to use the skills you're learning to report out a powerful story proposal — not some notion you came up with five minutes ago and dashed off in a paragraph, but a fully fledged, deeply reported story memo that would make any editor salivate in anticipation and know in her bones that the story you're pitching is viable. Armed with this powerfully reported proposal, you'll be able to triumph in any high-level journalism course or capstone project, be it a documentary, a profile, a narrative feature, or a hard-hitting investigation.

II. Overall Learning Objectives and Assessment

- Understand what investigative reporting is and how it differs from other kinds of journalism
- Master how to find, obtain, and interpret public records
- Know how to identify, approach, and interview sources, even ones who are scared or hostile.

- Execute the fundamentals of data-driven reporting by sifting and analyzing data sets.
- Understand how to bulletproof a story and make it fair
- Produce a deeply researched, powerful story memo to execute as capstone or a project

These skills will be assessed mainly through in-the-field assignments, ranging from obtaining court records, filing FOIAs, conducting interviews, crunching data. The main assignment is to develop a deeply researched and robust proposal for an in-depth, original story to be executed as a capstone or other advanced project. There will also be short written assignments, role plays, pop quizzes, and class discussions.

III. Course Notes

In this course, you mainly learn by doing. So it requires you to leap into real-world assignments, overcome obstacles, and apply the skills you will be introduced to in class.

It also requires you to think ahead: What major, capstone-quality story do you want to execute at Annenberg? And then it requires you to do the reporting to prepare a compelling, in-depth, and viable story proposal.

NB: This syllabus is a guide, but readings and assignment will change. You must thoroughly read any and all emails the instructor sends to your USC email account.

Finally, this class has a policy of no screens. Yes, you should bring your laptop to class, because occasionally we will do exercises that require going online. But in general you will not be on your phone, laptop, or any other screen. Please see below: "IX Laptop Policy." **NOTE: This policy means that you must print out the readings and bring them to class.**

IV. Description and Assessment of Assignments

- The main assignment: a well-researched, clearly presented, and fully-fledged story proposal.
- Field work such as obtaining public records and interviewing sources.
- Data analysis exercises.
- Short written assignments such as an analysis of an investigative report.
- Pop quizzes.
- In-class assignments, ranging from role plays to gaming out a story.

Some assignments will be graded, A-F. Others will be pass/fail, meaning you get full credit for the assignment or no credit at all. Still other assignments will be ungraded, but those will count toward class participation.

V. Grading

a. Breakdown of Grade

Assignment	% of Grade
Story proposal	45%
Written assignments (4)	20%

Data exercises (3)	15%
Other assignments (FOIA, health grade, source list, scrub)	10%
Class participation (including weekly FOIAs)	10%
TOTAL	100%

b. 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

c. Grading Standards

This class has a wide variety of assignments. All written assignments will be graded for how well they demonstrate mastery of the task, as well as for accuracy of the information and clarity of the writing.

Data analysis assignments will be graded for how well they show mastery of the skills, as well as for clarity and specificity of the accompanying data diaries.

Reporting assignments will be graded on whether (or how much of) the information was gathered.

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.

“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.

d. Grading Timeline

In general, assignments will be graded and returned within one week.

VI. Assignment Submission Policy

All assignments are due at the date and time specified. Lacking prior discussion and agreement with the instructor, late assignments will automatically be given a grade of F.

Assignments must be submitted via email to schoofs@usc.edu. For written assignments, the email must include both a Word document attachment and also link to a Google Doc. For data assignments, the email must include Excel spreadsheet attachment and a link to a Google Sheet.

VII. Required Readings and Supplementary Materials

All The President’s Men, by Carl Bernstein and Bob Woodward.

Numbers in the Newsroom: Using Math and Statistics in News, by Sarah Cohen.

All other readings will be available on the web, via USC online libraries, or handed out.

VIII. 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 Digital Lounge](#) 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 Professor 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.

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

X. Course Schedule: A Weekly Breakdown

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

	Topics/Daily Activities	Readings and Homework	Deliverable/Due Dates
Week 1 Date: 8/26	<p>Course overview: No matter what kind of reporting you want to do, this class will make you better.</p> <p>Key assignment is the pitch/memo — define it (traction, sources, etc.) The miracle of Nexis and USC Libraries.</p> <p>In-class exercise</p>	<p>HOMEWORK</p> <p>Interview an investigative reporter and analyze her/his project. (Find great investigative stories at these sites:</p> <p>https://www.pulitzer.org/prize-winners-by-category/206</p> <p>https://www.buzzfeednews.com/investigations</p> <p>https://www.propublica.org/</p> <p>Before you interview the author, read through his/her story and circle each and every source, data, document, or human. As part of your assignment, turn in a PDF of the story, showing the sources circled. In your interview with the author and your written story, address these questions: What harm was revealed? How did the journalist find the story? How did the journalist</p>	<p>Assignment: interview an investigative reporter. Due Monday, September 9, 9 a.m.</p> <p>Memo on story pitch. Due Monday, September 9, 9 a.m.</p>

		<p>obtain key pieces of information? What roadblocks did the journalist encounter, and how did s/he get around them? Write up what you learned in 1,000 words in the form of a news article, with a lede and a nut. Graded. Due Wednesday, September 4, 9:00 a.m.</p> <p>Think of a potential story idea. Conduct at least two interviews, which can be to find a story or to learn more about an idea you already have. Identify at least two kinds of documents that would shed light on your subject — extra credit if you obtain them. Do a Nexis clip search on the subject. Write a short summary — not more than 500 words — of one potential story idea. List the people you interviewed, with their phone numbers and email addresses; list the documents you identified; and cite the most helpful story you found on Nexis. (If you have two good story ideas, you can write up a second one for me to discuss.) If your story is investigative, identify what harm has been perpetrated: dollars stolen? Bodies injured, sickened, or killed? Trust betrayed? If it's not investigative but narrative or documentary, or a profile, or whatever, explain that and say why a reader would care. Ungraded but counts toward class participation. Due Monday, September 9, 9:00 am.</p> <p>READING</p>	
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		<p>Sample story pitches — to be handed out.</p> <p>Find this article on Nexis and read it, circling every source, data, document, or human: Confidentiality Cloaks Medicare Abuse, by Mark Schoofs and Maurice Tamman, Dec. 22, 2010. It was the kicker in a series that was named a Pulitzer finalist "for its penetration of the shadowy world of fraud and abuse in Medicare, probing previously concealed government databases to identify millions of dollars in waste and corrupt practices."</p> <p>NOTE: Get ahead by starting on the heavy reading load for next two classes.</p>	
Week 2 Date: 9/2	NO CLASS – LABOR DAY		
Week 3 Date: 9/9	<p>Public records 1</p> <p>Discuss pitch, story memo</p> <p>Anatomy of an investigation: Medicare</p> <p>Documents state of mind.</p>	<p><u>HOMEWORK</u></p> <p>Restaurant health grades. Assignment to be described in class. Pass/fail. Due Monday, September 16, at 9:00 am.</p> <p><u>READING</u></p> <p>Murder book — to be emailed by instructor.</p> <p>IRE "Keys to the Courthouse" tip sheet — to be emailed by instructor.</p> <p>Varsity Blues affidavit in support of criminal complaint: https://www.justice.gov/usao-ma/press-release/file/1142951/download.</p> <p>NOTE: Read this story only *after* you read the</p>	<p>Restaurant health grades: Due Monday, September 16, 9 a.m.</p> <p>Work on your story pitch.</p>

		<p>affidavit. They Had It Coming: https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2019/04/w-hat-college-admissions-scandal-reveals/586468/</p>	
<p>Week 4 Date: 9/16</p>	<p>Public records 2: criminal court.</p> <p>Guest lecture: How to read a murder book, by The Loyola Project on the Innocent.</p> <p>Discuss pitch/story memo.</p>	<p><u>HOMEWORK</u> Search warrant exercise. Go to the state criminal courthouse downtown. Look through the search warrant log, read some, and find a potential story in a search warrant. Write 500-1,000 words on what that story would be and provide a reporting plan with specific steps you would take to report it — what other documents you would seek, who you would interview, etc.. Be sure to include the search warrant. Graded. Due Monday, September 23, at 9:00 am.</p> <p>Set up an iFOIA account here: https://www.foia.org/. Email confirmation that you have done so by Monday, September 23, at 9 a.m.</p> <p><u>READING</u> How to be a FOIA Sleuth — to be emailed by instructor.</p> <p>RCFP Federal Open Government Guide. (NOTE: Pay special attention to the "Exemptions" section!): https://www.rcfp.org/wp-content/uploads/imported/FOGG.pdf</p> <p>RCFP California CPRA section through 10-b, "Court and litigation costs": https://www.rcfp.org/open-government-guide/california/</p>	<p>Search warrant exercise. (Remember to include the warrant!) Due Monday, September 23, 9:00 am.</p> <p>Send confirmation that you have set up an iFOIA account by Monday, September 23, 9 a.m.</p> <p>Work on your story pitch!</p>

		<p>IRE FOIA readings — to be emailed by instructor.</p> <p>From The Force Report," read: https://www.nj.com/news/2018/11/nj_police_use_of_force_punch_kick_pepper_spray_sho.html (Also feel welcome to look at other stories in the project here: https://force.nj.com/)</p> <p>John Kelly Called Elizabeth Warren An "Impolite Arrogant Woman" In An Email: https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/jasonleopold/john-kelly-called-elizabeth-warren-an-impolite-arrogant</p>	
<p>Week 5 Date: 9/23</p>	<p>Public records 3: FOIA & PRA</p> <p>Team exercise: Prepare a FOIA for one person's story proposal.</p>	<p>HOMEWORK</p> <p>Prepare a FOIA/PRA for your story. Pass/fail. Due Friday, September 27 at 5 p.m.</p> <p>NOTE: For the rest of the semester, file at least one FOIA or PRA every week, for any document you want. As those records come in, you will have stories for your internship or job, or for freelance articles that will give you great clips. Ungraded but counts toward class participation. Due every Friday at 5:00 pm.</p> <p>Draft of your pitch. Address each of the 8 items needed in your pitch. Ungraded but important for your success in this class. Due Friday, September 28, 9 a.m.</p> <p>READING</p> <p>"All You Americans Are Fired": https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/jessicagarrison/</p>	<p>Draft of your story pitch. Due Friday, September 28, 9 a.m.</p> <p>FOIA/PRA for your story. Due Friday, September 27 at 5 p.m.</p>

		all-you-americans-are-fired#.lseLeW8D5Q	
<p>Week 6 Date: 9/30</p>	<p>Public records 4: Civil suits. A gold mine for story ideas and sourcing.</p>	<p><u>HOMEWORK</u> Civil suits exercise. Go to the civil courthouse and find a civil suit against a famous person or company that you think has the makings of a strong story. Write 500-1,000 words on what that story would be and provide a reporting plan with specific steps you would take to report it — what other documents you would seek, who you would interview, etc. Include the complaint with your write-up. Graded. Due Monday, October 7, at 9 a.m.</p> <p>FOIA/PRA. Ungraded but counts toward class participation. Due Friday at 5 p.m.</p> <p><u>READING</u> 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>IRE "source checklist" — to be emailed by instructor.</p> <p><u>GET AHEAD ON DATA!</u> Read <i>Numbers in the Newsroom</i>, introduction and pages 1-32. NOTE: Do <i>*not*</i> just read this. Read it and <i>*understand*</i> it. You will need these basic math skills — both for the next class and for life.</p> <p>IF YOU DON'T KNOW</p>	<p>FOIA/PRA due Friday, October 4, at 5 p.m.</p> <p>Civil suits exercise. (Remember to include the complaint!) Due Monday, October 7, at 9 a.m.</p> <p>GET AHEAD ON DATA READING!</p>

		<p>GOOGLE SHEETS, FAMILIARIZE YOURSELF BY MASTERING THE CONTENT IN THESE TWO GUIDES: https://railsware.com/blog/google-sheets-for-beginners/ and https://zapier.com/learn/google-sheets/google-sheets-tutorial/</p>	
<p>Week 7 Date: 10/7</p>	<p>Investigative interview</p> <p>Exercise: Directed reading from All the President's Men</p>	<p><u>HOMEWORK</u></p> <p>Interview at least one source for your pitch memo. Write a 500-750 word critique of that interview — what information you got, what information you wanted but didn't get, what tactics/techniques worked, what didn't, what you would do differently. Pass/fail. Due Monday, October 14, at 9 a.m.</p> <p>Draft of your pitch. Address each of the 8 items needed in your pitch. Ungraded but important for your success in this class. Due Friday, September 11, 9 a.m.</p> <p>FOIA/PRA. Ungraded but counts toward class participation. Due Friday at 5:00 pm.</p> <p><u>READING</u></p> <p>IRE Kimbriell Kelly sourcing tip sheet — to be emailed by instructor.</p> <p><u>CONTINUE GETTING AHEAD ON DATA</u></p> <p>Master the concepts in <i>Numbers in the Newsroom</i>, introduction and pages 1-32, and in these two guides to Google Sheets: https://railsware.com/blog/google-sheets-for-beginners/ and</p>	<p>Draft pitch. Due Friday, September 11, 9 a.m.</p> <p>FOIA/PRA due Friday, October 11, at 5 p.m.</p> <p>Critique of interview for your pitch memo. Due Monday, October 14, at 9 a.m.</p> <p>Keep working on your pitch memos.</p> <p>Continue getting ahead on data.</p>

		https://zapier.com/learn/google-sheets/google-sheets-tutorial/ . ALSO, ADD IN THIS GUIDE ON PIVOT TABLES: https://www.benlcollins.com/spreadsheets/pivot-tables-google-sheets/	
Week 8 Date: 10/14	<p>Finding & developing sources</p> <p>Exercise: Who would know?</p>	<p>HOMEWORK Write a list of at least 10 human sources for your project, ranked by likely to know and by likely to talk. Pass/fail. Due <u>Wednesday</u>, October 16, at 5 p.m.</p> <p>FOIA/PRA. Ungraded but counts toward class participation. Due <u>Wednesday</u>, at 5 p.m.</p> <p>READING LAST CHANCE TO PREPARE FOR DATA CLASSES: Master <i>Numbers in the Newsroom</i>, introduction and pages 1-32. Also master these three guides to Google Sheets: These two for beginners: https://railsware.com/blog/google-sheets-for-beginners/ and https://zapier.com/learn/google-sheets/google-sheets-tutorial/, and this one on pivot tables: https://www.benlcollins.com/spreadsheets/pivot-tables-google-sheets/</p> <p>How to interview data https://training.npr.org/visual/what-to-do-with-a-big-pile-of-data/</p> <p>“Clean Water Laws Are Neglected, at a Cost in Suffering” https://www.nytimes.com/2009/09/13/us/13water.html</p>	<p>NOTE: Fall Recess is Thursday, October 17 and Friday, October 18</p> <p>List of human sources. Due Wednesday, October 16, 5 p.m.</p> <p>FOIA PRA. Due Wednesday, October 16, 5 p.m.</p> <p>Make sure you master the data reading!</p>
Week 9 Date: 10/21	<p>The power of data</p> <p>What these data</p>	<p>HOMEWORK Find a story in "Dollars for Docs" data set (to be</p>	<p>Story pitch update. Due Friday, October 25, 9 a.m.</p>

	<p>courses will give you</p> <p>What exactly is a data set and how to interview it</p> <p>Basic spreadsheet functions: Outliers — sort function. (Does not need to be mathematical outlier.) Totals — sum function Count Average and median Ratio (percent or fraction) Rate (per capita) Look for change over time — new-old/old.</p>	<p>emailed by instructor.) Describe the story clearly and concisely in one paragraph, then explain why you think it's a strong story and how you would report it. 500-750 words. If you have questions about the data, I will act as the data owner and can answer questions. (Note: Cheat sheet for Google Sheets: https://docs.google.com/document/d/1GEJqwcUV5payyxwzzAc_ttkMUnXdKDXoHmPTPUBoK0/edit.) Pass/Fail. Due Friday, October 25, at 9 a.m.</p> <p>List at least three data sets that might bear on some aspect of the story pitch you are developing for this class. Due Monday, October 28, 9 a.m.</p> <p>File update on your story pitch: How have you progressed since the last draft? What challenges do you face? How do you plan to overcome them? Due Friday, October 25, 9 a.m. Ungraded but important for your success in the class.</p> <p>FOIA/PRA. Ungraded but counts toward class participation. Due Friday at 5 p.m. NOTE: FOIA or PRA a data set.</p> <p>READING For Cops, No Limit: https://www.pulitzer.org/winners/sun-sentinel</p> <p>Guide to pivot tables: https://www.benlcollins.com/spreadsheets/pivot-tables-google-sheets/</p>	<p>FOIA/PRA due Friday, October 25, at 5 p.m.</p> <p>“Dollars for Doc” story idea. Due Monday, October 28, 9 a.m.</p> <p>List of at least three data sets that bear on the story you’re developing into a pitch. Due Monday, Monday, October 28, 9 a.m.</p>
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<p>Week 10 Date: 10/28</p>	<p>Pivot tables & data diaries</p> <p>Good data practices</p> <p>How to use pivot tables to find great stories</p>	<p>HOMEWORK</p> <p>Using the WaPo Fatal Force data set, answer these questions. Be sure to log all your steps under each question.</p> <p>QUESTIONS TO ANSWER</p> <p>What state has the most police shootings?</p> <p>What state has the most police shootings per capita?</p> <p>Has that changed over the last five years and, if so, how?</p> <p>What state has the most police shootings of black victims?</p> <p>What state has the most police shootings of black victims per capita?</p> <p>Has that changed over the last five years and, if so, how?</p> <p>Also use a pivot table to answer any one question you'd like</p> <p>Write down your question and log the steps you take to answer it in a data diary.</p> <p>Graded. Due Monday, Nov 4 at 9 a.m.</p> <p>(Cheat sheets for pivot tables in Google Sheets: https://docs.google.com/document/d/18ZtN0ecpOly-74qZGgdP3zp_QhErFRx7vJx2viOylSo/edit and http://2015.padio.org/tutorials/spreadsheets/basic-aggregate-pivot-tables/)</p> <p>FOIA/PRA. Ungraded but counts toward class participation. Due Friday at 5 p.m. NOTE: FOIA or PRA a data set.</p> <p>READING</p> <p>"The Tennis Racket"</p> <p>https://www.buzzfeednews.com</p>	<p>FOIA/PRA. Due Friday, November 1, 5 p.m.</p> <p>Fatal Force assignment. Due Graded. Due Monday, November 4, at 9 a.m.</p> <p>Work on your story pitch.</p>
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<p>Week 11 Date: 11/4</p>	<p>How data can lie</p> <p>Data mistakes Two basic kinds: Dirty data and misinterpreting the data.</p> <p>Pro Tip: Combine Datasets</p> <p>Where to find data? If something is inspected, licensed, enforced, or purchased, there probably is a database. If there is a form filled out, online or on paper, there is a database.</p>	<p>HOMEWORK</p> <p>In the data set provided to you, find one internal “dirty data” problem and fix it. Next, identify one external “interpretation” problem and fix it. Graded. Due Friday, November 8, at 9:00 am.</p> <p>Come up with a plausible story combining two real-world datasets. In 500 words, describe the two data sets and the story you believe could result from combining them. Extra credit if it relates to the story idea you are working on! Pass/Fail, due Monday, November 11, 9:00 am. NOTE: here is resource to</p>	<p>FOIA/PRA. Due Friday, November 8, 5:00 pm.</p> <p>Dirty data exercise. Due Monday, November 11, 9 a.m.</p> <p>Work on your story pitch.</p> <p><i><u>Get ahead on heavy reading load for next week!</u></i></p>

		<p>help you find data sets: Dana Amihere’s guide to where to find data: https://docs.google.com/document/d/1flCp8FYZBBNxoZAMmMPW6AEzguk2mGQpNFJJCmsv-s/edit</p> <p>FOIA/PRA. Ungraded but counts toward class participation. Due Friday at 5:00 pm. NOTE: FOIA or PRA a data set.</p> <p>READING IRE "backgrounding sources" tip sheet — to be emailed by instructor.</p> <p>IRE "finding people with data" tip sheet — to be emailed by instructor.</p> <p><u>NOTE: Get ahead on next week’s heavy reading load.</u></p>	
<p>Week 12 Date: 11/11</p>	<p>How to perform a scrub</p>	<p>HOMEWORK Scrub one person or entity for your pitch memo. Graded. Due Friday, November 15, 9 a.m.</p> <p>Draft of your pitch. Address each of the 8 items needed in your pitch. Ungraded but important for your success in this class. Due Monday, September 18, 9 a.m.</p> <p>FOIA/PRA. Ungraded but counts toward class participation. Due Friday at 5 p.m.</p> <p>READING A Rape on Campus. http://web.archive.org/web/20141119200349/http://www.rollingstone.com/culture/features/a-rape-on-campus-20141119</p> <p>Columbia Journalism School</p>	<p>Scrub. Due Friday, November 15, 9 p.m.</p> <p>FOIA/PRA due Friday, November 15, 5 p.m.</p> <p>Draft story pitch. Due Monday, September 18, 9 a.m.</p>

		<p>report on UVA rape story: https://www.rollingstone.com/culture/culture-news/rolling-stone-and-uva-the-columbia-university-graduate-school-of-journalism-report-44930/</p> <p>Verdict in the Rolling Stone libel trial: https://www.scribd.com/document/330016956/Rolling-Stone-Verdict</p> <p>5 Takeaways From the Rolling Stone Defamation Verdict: https://www.cjr.org/analysis/rolling_stone_verdict_defamation_case.php</p>	
<p>Week 13 Date: 11/18</p>	<p>Bulletproofing.</p> <p>Discuss UVA rape story and Columbia J-School report on it.</p> <p>Fair & accurate: "no surprises" journalism</p> <p>Write a no-surprises letter</p>	<p><u>HOMEWORK</u> Work on your pitch memo!</p> <p>FOIA/PRA. Ungraded but counts toward class participation. Due Friday at 5 p.m.</p>	<p>FOIA/PRA. Due Friday, November 22, 5 p.m.</p> <p>Work on your pitch memo!</p>
<p>Week 14 Date: 11/25</p>	<p>Use your investigative mind to cover a breaking news event.</p> <p>In-class exercise.</p>	<p><u>HOMEWORK</u> Work on your pitch memo!</p> <p>NO FOIA/PRA ASSIGNMENT DUE TO THANKSGIVING.</p> <p><u>READING</u> TBD</p>	<p>NOTE: Thanksgiving Recess: Wednesday, November 27, to Sunday, December 1.</p>
<p>Week 15 Date: 12/2</p>	<p>Investigative case study</p> <p>Course evaluations.</p>	<p><u>HOMEWORK</u> Final draft of your pitch memo. Address each of the 8 items needed in your pitch. Graded. Due Monday, Friday, December 6, 5 p.m.</p> <p>FOIA/PRA. Ungraded but counts toward class participation. due Friday, 5 p.m.</p>	<p>Final pitch memo. Due Friday, December 6, 5 p.m.</p> <p>FOIA/PRA. Due Friday December 6, 5 p.m.</p>

FINAL EXAM PERIOD Date: 12/16, 4:30-6:30 p.m.	Class summation		
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XI. Policies and Procedures

Additional Policies

Students are expected to read their USC email for messages from the instructors. Sometimes, readings or assignments will be changed, and it will be no excuse not to have read the email. Attendance is critical, because the discussion and in-class exercises are major parts of learning in this course. For field assignments, you will be representing USC, so you must conduct yourself in a professional and respectful manner.

Communication

Always feel welcome to reach out to the instructor via email or, if urgent, text. I will almost always reply within 24 hours, sooner if it is urgent.

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 or public relations 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 Health Counseling Services - (213) 740-7711 – 24/7 on call

engemannshc.usc.edu/counseling

Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention.

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline - 1 (800) 273-8255 – 24/7 on call

suicidepreventionlifeline.org

Free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

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

engemannshc.usc.edu/rsvp

Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender-based harm.

Office of Equity and Diversity (OED) | Title IX - (213) 740-5086

equity.usc.edu, titleix.usc.edu

Information about how to get help or help a survivor of harassment or discrimination, rights of protected classes, reporting options, and additional resources for students, faculty, staff, visitors, and applicants. The university prohibits discrimination or harassment based on the following protected characteristics: race, color, national origin, ancestry, religion, sex, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, age, physical disability, medical condition, mental disability, marital status, pregnancy, veteran status, genetic information, and any other characteristic which may be specified in applicable laws and governmental regulations.

Bias Assessment Response and Support - (213) 740-2421

studentaffairs.usc.edu/bias-assessment-response-support

Avenue to report incidents of bias, hate crimes, and microaggressions for appropriate investigation and response.

The Office of Disability Services and Programs - (213) 740-0776

dsp.usc.edu

Support and accommodations for students with disabilities. Services include assistance in providing readers/notetakers/interpreters, special accommodations for test taking needs, assistance with architectural barriers, assistive technology, and support for individual needs.

USC Support and Advocacy - (213) 821-4710

studentaffairs.usc.edu/ssa

Assists students and families in resolving complex personal, financial, and academic issues adversely affecting their success as a student.

Diversity at USC - (213) 740-2101

diversity.usc.edu

Information on events, programs and training, the Provost's Diversity and Inclusion Council, Diversity Liaisons for each academic school, chronology, participation, and various resources for students.

USC Emergency - UPC: (213) 740-4321, HSC: (323) 442-1000 – 24/7 on call

dps.usc.edu, emergency.usc.edu

Emergency assistance and avenue to report a crime. Latest updates regarding safety, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible.

USC Department of Public Safety - UPC: (213) 740-6000, HSC: (323) 442-120 – 24/7 on call

dps.usc.edu

Non-emergency assistance or information.

Annenberg Student Success Fund

<https://annenberg.usc.edu/current-students/resources/additional-funding-resources>

The Annenberg Student Success Fund is a donor-funded financial aid account available to USC Annenberg undergraduate and graduate students for non-tuition expenses related to extra- and co-curricular programs and opportunities.

XII. About Your Instructor

Over his 30-year career, Pulitzer Prize-winner Mark Schoofs edited Chicago's lesbian and gay newsweekly, *The Windy City Times*; won a Pulitzer Prize for his reporting on AIDS in Africa at New York's famed alternative newspaper *The Village Voice*; shared in another Pulitzer Prize at *The Wall Street Journal* for reporting from Ground Zero on the 9/11 terrorist attacks; wrote the opening and closing stories in a *Wall Street Journal* series on Medicare fraud that was a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize; taught journalism at Yale University; oversaw complex investigations at ProPublica; and launched and led a powerhouse investigative reporting team at BuzzFeed News. In less than five years, that team, which he built from zero to more than 20 reporters, earned some of journalism's top prizes including a George Polk Award and a National Magazine Award, and its work was twice named as a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize.