



## **JOUR 206 Community Reporting** **1 Unit**

**Spring 2020 – Mondays**

**8-11:50 a.m./ 11 a.m.-2:50 p.m./ 2-5:50 p.m.**

**Section:** 21003R/21105R/21007R

**Location:** Media Center, Wallis Annenberg Hall

**Instructor: Saba Hamedy**

**Office:** ANN 102

**Office Hours:** Mondays, 7-8 a.m. and 6-7 p.m.

**Contact Info:** hamedy@usc.edu /sbhamedy@gmail.com

310-438-4205 Twitter: Saba\_h

### **I. Course Description**

This course gives journalism majors hands-on experience in writing digital news and social media. It is taught in the Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism's state-of-the-art Media Center in Wallis Annenberg Hall. Students work four hours a week for Annenberg Media to fulfill this lab shift, which runs concurrently with the core journalism courses Reporting and Writing I and Reporting and Writing II. The practicum is credit/no-credit.

The class meets in the Media Center at Wallis Annenberg Hall, outside of ANN 205C.

### **II. Overall Learning Objectives and Assessment**

- Identify elements that make a story newsworthy for different audiences
- Identify diverse sources and develop story ideas in a specific community
- Write news briefs and stories on deadline and in accordance with professional industry standards under the guidance of student editors and faculty and in collaboration with other student reporters and editors
- Create content for digital and social platforms on deadline and in accordance with professional industry standards and in collaboration with other student reporters and editors
- Apply principles of ethics in real-life news situations

### **III. Description of Assignments**

Students in this course participate in the production of frequently updated digital platforms including uscannenbergmedia.com and social media. Assignments consist of on-the-job training and experience that mirrors the real world. Student reporters will work on tasks as assigned by student editors and with the support of faculty and coaches. Every week students are responsible for bringing in story ideas and writing a hand-off note at the end of their shifts. Failure to submit a hand-off note in Trello (the newsroom system) means a student will not get credit for that shift and must repeat it.

Student duties include:

- Generating story ideas
- Finding and maintaining source lists
- Conducting research and interviews
- Writing news briefs, social media posts and longer stories
- Writing a handoff note for other reporters and editors summarizing their progress on a story

Students are required to keep up on the news by reading a variety of news outlets, listening to local and national radio or podcasts, and watching local and national news.

## **IV. Grading**

This class is about hands-on learning. It is designed to give you practical experience in a newsroom. In order to succeed in this class, you will need to attend your shift and complete the tasks assigned to you, including a shift handover note to be done before you leave the Media Center. The student-led news outlets that make up Annenberg Media are counting on you. If you must miss a shift due to documented illness or emergency, you must notify your instructor and student editor(s) via the newsroom Slack channel and make up the session within two weeks (religious holidays are exempt as are some other limited circumstances.) Please arrive ON TIME. If you are late, you will not get credit for the shift and must make it up. Do not schedule interviews or assignments for other classes during this time period or you will not receive credit and must make up the shift.

### **c. Grading Standards**

This class is a credit/no-credit class. You will not receive a letter grade for this class. However, you will be assessed on your effort and output and the aim is to produce publishable work. That work could help you if you are seeking a job in a newsroom or as a student manager with Annenberg Media in subsequent semesters. You cannot pass this class without doing the hands-on work on site.

## **V. Assignment Submission Policy**

Students will work under the guidance of student editors and with the support of faculty, instructors and coaches. Every week, you should arrive with at least three story ideas. Instructors will discuss current stories and review previous week's work. All students must complete a shift handover notes in Trello before they leave the Media Center. You should check in with your instructor and student editors before you leave. If you do not complete a handover note you will not receive credit for your shift.

## **VI. Required Readings and Supplementary Materials**

You will be expected to arrive at your shift with a knowledge of what is happening in local and national news. You will write in accordance with AP style.

## **VII. Laptop Policy**

All undergraduate and graduate Annenberg majors and minors are required to have a PC or Apple laptop that can be used in Annenberg classes. Please refer to the [Annenberg Digital Lounge](#) for more information. To connect to USC's Secure Wireless network, please visit USC's [Information Technology Services](#) website.

## **VIII. Add/Drop Dates for Session 001 (15 weeks: 1/13/20 - 5/1/20)**

**Friday, January 31:** Last day to register and add classes for Session 001

**Friday, January 31:** Last day to drop a class without a mark of "W," except for Monday-only classes, and receive a refund for Session 001

**Tuesday, February 4:** Last day to drop a Monday-only class without a mark of "W" and receive a refund for Session 001

**Friday, February 28:** 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, February 28:** 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, April 3:** Last day to drop a class with a mark of "W" for Session 001

## **IX. Course Schedule: A Weekly Breakdown**

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

### **Week 1 – January 13**

Meet Annenberg faculty and staff working in the Media Center director and the student leaders for Annenberg Media. Review previous student work and Annenberg Media's greatest hits. Complete onboarding tasks with Graham Clark and Christina Bellantoni, including training in the Annenberg Media publishing system, Okta, Slack and Trello. Learn from Bellantoni how to get reimbursed for any costs incurred while reporting. Understand your responsibilities as an Annenberg Media "MJ," or multimedia journalist. Follow Annenberg Media on Twitter, Instagram and FB.

Writing workshop: File a sample story use dummy copy and photo. Write a headline, subhed, caption, picture, hyperlinked, attribution. Tag your story. Best practices. Audience -- why are we here? Who are writing for? What are our goals? Here you'll apply what you're learning in 207! Deconstruct a copy edit test. Discuss news judgment. Time element - what is the news about this TODAY. What's new about this story? How can I advance this story? Why would a young person on this campus be interested in this story?

### **Week 2 – January 20 (No Class, MLK Day)**

### **Week 3 – January 27**

Spend time talking with and getting to know the Annenberg Media student leaders who will be on duty during your shift. How to make a phone call and ask for an interview, how to email when no one answers the call, use public transportation. How do you find people to talk to? How do you find people to talk to at USC or in the South LA community? (Directory of important phone numbers. David Carlisle, provost, deans, student leaders.) What defines the South LA community? How to do a handoff notes for the next MJs. Communication. Identifying yourself as a reporter and other basic ethics. Review Annenberg Media's Guide to Thoughtful Language. Special circumstances -- writing about crime, minors, race and ethnicity. What is AP style and why do we use it? Practice AP style and quizzes. Amy the stylebot. Review Annenberg Media's guide to best practices on social media. Writing captions for Facebook and Instagram and posts for Twitter.

Accuracy, attribution and sourcing. What are Annenberg Media rules on sourcing? Anonymous sources. Corrections. Transparency. Conflict of interest. Avoiding plagiarizing when you research a story. What info do I need to get from interviewees? Special consideration (trauma, kids, non-English speakers). Attribution. No friends/family. What should I do with info or photos I find on social media? When is my deadline? How do I share what I've learned with other parts of the newsroom? Diverse sourcing. Getting all sides of the issue. Using quotes and attribution. Rights and responsibilities as a journalist. How do I know my information is ready to publish or air? How should I use a press release? How should I read a lawsuit or other court document? Choosing quotes. How to correctly attribute information. How to use time elements in a digital story. Review stories from professional media outlets. Who's in them? What's the lead? What made this news for an LA Times or other outlets? What's the USC angle? How to check past coverage so you aren't repeating yourself. Log in to City News Service and AP photo. More on MC ethics. Brainstorming good story pitches.

### **Week 4 – February 3**

The newsroom is up and running fully. You will work on stories as assigned. You should come prepared with story pitches when you arrive for your shift. You will need to write a handoff note at the end of your shift. This week we will review preparing for an interview, requesting an interview, and following up.

### **Week 5 - February 10**

The newsroom is up and running fully. You will work on stories as assigned. You should come prepared with story pitches to your shift. You and your instructor will review stories published last week across platforms as well as some of the other stories that came out of the newsroom. What resonated with our audience, and why? Time permitting, we will discuss the good, bad and the ugly when it comes to analytics. What is a meaningful way to look at how people engage with our content as journalists? You will need to write a handoff note at the end of your shift.

### **Week 6 - February 17 (No Class, President's Day)**

### **Week 7 - February 24**

The newsroom is up and running fully. You will work on stories as assigned. You and your instructor will review stories published last week across platforms as well as some of the other stories that came out of the newsroom. What resonated with our audience, and why? You should come prepared with story pitches to your shift. You will need to write a handoff note at the end of your shift.

### **Week 8 - March 2**

The newsroom is up and running fully. You will work on stories as assigned. You and your instructor will review stories published last week across platforms as well as some of the other stories that came out of the newsroom. What resonated with our audience, and why? You should come prepared with story pitches to your shift. You will need to write a handoff note at the end of your shift.

### **Week 9 - March 9**

The newsroom is up and running fully. You will work on stories as assigned. You and your instructor will review stories published last week across platforms as well as some of the other stories that came out of the newsroom. What resonated with our audience, and why? You should come prepared with story pitches to your shift. You will need to write a handoff note at the end of your shift.

### **Spring Break - March 16 (No Class)**

### **Week 10 - March 23**

The newsroom is up and running fully. You will work on stories as assigned. You and your instructor will review stories published last week across platforms as well as some of the other stories that came out of the newsroom. What resonated with our audience, and why? You should come prepared with story pitches to your shift. You will need to write a handoff note at the end of your shift.

### **Week 11 - March 30**

What resonated with our audience, and why? You should come prepared with story pitches to your shift. You will need to write a handoff note at the end of your shift.

## **Week 12 – April 6**

The newsroom is up and running fully. You will work on stories as assigned. You and your instructor will review stories published last week across platforms as well as some of the other stories that came out of the newsroom. What resonated with our audience, and why? You should come prepared with story pitches to your shift. You will need to write a handoff note at the end of your shift.

## **Week 13 – April 13**

The newsroom is up and running fully. You will work on stories as assigned. You and your instructor will review stories published last week across platforms as well as some of the other stories that came out of the newsroom. What resonated with our audience, and why? You should come prepared with story pitches to your shift. You will need to write a handoff note at the end of your shift.

## **Week 14 – April 20**

The newsroom is up and running fully. You will work on stories as assigned. You and your instructor will review stories published last week across platforms as well as some of the other stories that came out of the newsroom. What resonated with our audience, and why? You should come prepared with story pitches to your shift. You will need to write a handoff note at the end of your shift.

## **Week 15 – April 27**

Last week of shifts.

## **Week 17 – May 4**

Wrap party. No shifts. Good luck with finals!

## **X. Policies and Procedures**

### **Additional Policies**

Please see clearly stated policies above. You will need to check your USC email and Slack regularly as well as follow the preceding rules about lab shifts.

### **Internships**

Internships cannot be substituted for the Media Center practicum.

## **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

### *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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://equity.usc.edu), [titleix.usc.edu](http://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](http://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](http://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*

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](http://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](http://dps.usc.edu), [emergency.usc.edu](http://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](http://dps.usc.edu)

Non-emergency assistance or information.

*Annenberg Student Success Fund*

<https://annenbergsuccessfund.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.

*Breaking Bread Program [undergraduate students only]*

<https://undergrad.usc.edu/faculty/bread/>

The Breaking Bread Program is designed to provide individual undergraduate students with an opportunity to meet and have scholarly discussions with faculty members outside of the normal classroom setting. Through this program, students and faculty enjoy good company and great conversation by literally "breaking bread" over a meal together and USC will pick up the tab! Your meal event can take place anywhere outside of the normal classroom setting. Your venue can be a restaurant or eatery on or off-campus.

## **XI. About Your Instructor**

Saba Hamedy is a West Coast-based news editor for HuffPost. Previously, she worked as a breaking news reporter in Washington, D.C. for CNN Politics, where she also co-authored "The Point" newsletter with Chris Cillizza. Prior to CNN, Hamedy worked at Mashable as a digital entertainment reporter. Hamedy kicked off her career at the Los Angeles Times, where she covered national and entertainment business news, including the massive Sony Hack in 2014. She graduated from Boston University with degrees in political science and journalism.